



**CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES
DEPARTMENT FOR PUBLIC HEALTH**

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Clinicians, Public Health, and Laboratory providers:

The Kentucky Department for Public Health is alerting you to a sharp increase in shiga-toxin-producing *E. Coli* (STEC) O103 cases in Kentucky. Cases have been identified from March 5 – 25, 2019, so far, and are typically young (teenagers and children), often with histories of extensive fast food exposures. We have identified a number of adults also, so this outbreak is not limited to young people.


Please be alert to patients with acute diarrheal illnesses consistent with STEC and proceed with proper enteric testing to identify cases. If you receive initial positive results for any *E. coli* (e.g., culture, multiplex PCR), please report cases immediately (w/i 1 business day) to your local health department using the EPID 200 form or entering a morbidity report in NEDSS. Electronic lab reports (ELR) alone are not sufficient to report cases.

Please note: *All* shiga-toxin-producing *E. coli* is reportable (not just O157:H7); any shiga-toxin-positive specimens must be reported and sent regardless of whether or not they are positive on an O157 screen

Additionally, for *E. coli*-positive patients, please submit stool specimens immediately, without waiting for batching, in Cary-Blair transport medium to the Kentucky Division of Laboratory Services (DLS). Labs can use KDPH's FedEx account to send specimens priority overnight. You can contact DLS at 502-782-7735 for further guidance if you are unfamiliar with specimen submission procedures.

For additional questions or guidance, please contact the DPH Reportable Disease Section at 502-564-3261 during daytime hours, or our Epidemiology on-call service after hours at 888-9-REPORT (888-973-7678).

Sincerely,


Doug Thoroughman, PhD, MS
State Epidemiologist (Acting)