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- **E. coli O157:H7 Outbreak Associated with a Canada Day Picnic in the City of Toronto**

FROM:

David L. Mowat, MBChB MPH FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health

Introduction

Peel Public Health is assisting Toronto Public Health in the investigation of an E. coli O157:H7 outbreak.

This outbreak is associated with a picnic at Morningside Park in Scarborough for a Sri Lankan community group held on July 1st 2007. Approximately 300 to 400 persons attended the event; many of whom may be Peel residents.

As of July 12, 2007, Toronto Public Health has confirmed six cases of E. coli O157. In addition, two Peel residents who attended the event have been hospitalized with symptoms consistent with E.coli infection. The most likely mode of transmission is considered to be food-borne. There is evidence that secondary transmission may be occurring in households as well.

Peel Public Health is asking physicians to be vigilant in the detection and appropriate testing of G.I. illness.

Please ask any suspect E. coli O157:H7 cases about attendance at this picnic and report to Peel Public Health.

Signs and Symptoms

Signs and symptoms of E. coli O157:H7 include: diarrhea (with/without blood), abdominal pain, nausea, or vomiting. The incubation period is typically 3-4 days (range 2 to 10 days). E. coli O157:H7 is highly contagious and is spread by consuming contaminated food or by direct person-to-person transmission.

Complications

Complications include dehydration and hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), which presents with hemolytic anemia, thrombocytopenia and acute renal dysfunction.

Diagnosis

Laboratory diagnosis of E. coli O157:H7 includes stool testing for bacterial culture, which should be submitted in the enteric transport media (pink liquid). Blood culture for verotoxin producing E. coli can also confirm the diagnosis and can be performed if indicated.

All samples potentially related to this outbreak should be sent to the Central Public Health Laboratory for testing.
Please label the requisition "Canada Day Outbreak, # 3895-2007-242".

Reminders for Patients

Please advise suspect cases to avoid preparing or handling food that will be eaten by others. Emphasize frequent hand washing to help reduce the risk of transmission.

Verotoxin-producing E. coli infections are reportable communicable diseases.

Please report all suspect and confirmed cases immediately to Peel Public Health at (905) 799-7700.