



# Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC)

Public Health  
Environmental Health Services

## Fact Sheet

### What is STEC?

STEC is a kind of *E. coli* that:

- Causes a disease by making a toxin called Shiga toxin.
- Lives in the guts of farm animals such as cattle, goats, pigs and sheep.
- Spreads when you get tiny amounts of human or animal feces in your mouth.
- Can cause gastroenteritis, which causes abdominal cramps, diarrhea, and hemorrhagic colitis.

Many people become infected at petting zoos every year, it is important for you and your family to follow these recommendations below in order to reduce your chances of getting ill.



### Recommendations

- Wash your hands after touching animals or the areas where they live, roam, or eat.
- Wash your hands with soap and water. If not available, use a hand sanitizer, and then wash your hands as soon as possible.
- Do not eat or drink around animals.
- Do not share your food with the animals.
- Do not leave children unattended; always supervise your children around animals.



For more information on STEC, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/general/index.html>



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