

# *E. COLI* O157:H7 IN MINNESOTA CASES LINKED TO GROUND BEEF



Product removed from store shelves; customers asked to return or destroy it

Routine monitoring by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) found that the cases of illness were all caused by *E. coli* O157:H7 with the same DNA fingerprint. All of the ill individuals had eaten ground beef purchased from one of four Lunds or Byerly's groceries started showing symptoms between April 21 and 28. The cases include two children and five adults. Three of the ill individuals were hospitalized, but all have been discharged.

"Thorough cooking kills *E. coli* bacteria. However, we know that some of this meat was contaminated so it is safer to eliminate the risk altogether by recommending that people not consume the meat," said Kirk Smith, Supervisor of the Foodborne Illness Unit with MDH.

## In a related story: *E. coli* scare changes menu at little league

Following reports early last month of *E. coli* infection in three Napa Valley children, who got sick from hamburger patties sold at a St. Helena Little League snack shack, Little League baseball spectators in St. Helena will no longer be able to buy a burger during game time.

Jim Gamble, president of St. Helena Little League, said the organization's snack shacks now serve only pre-packaged and pre-cooked food. "The resolution was passed in early April. Unfortunately, these children got sick from contaminated beef. We're all very grateful they've fully recovered. It was scary."

To avoid passing  
on *E. coli* O157:H7

- Cook hamburgers and all ground beef to an internal temperature of 160° F or 71°C
- Keep raw meat separate from ready-to-eat foods.
- Wash hands, counters, and utensils with hot soapy water after they touch raw meat.
- Never place cooked hamburger patties on the unwashed plate that held raw patties.

FROM MINNESOTA DEPT OF HEALTH, NAPA VALLEY REGISTER

