

4/4/2024

*\*NOTICE: This health alert provides written guidance for health care professionals and others who may need to take action to prevent or control a notifiable condition. It is not intended to provide guidance for the general public.*

## Provider Alert: Shiga Toxin producing *E. coli* Outbreak Linked to Raw Milk

### Actions Requested

- Be aware that a Shiga Toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) outbreak linked to raw milk consumption with one case identified in Thurston County. Cozy Vale Creamery raw milk and cream products with best by dates of 3/18/2024 to 3/28/2024 were recalled on 3/18/2024. Recommend that patients avoid raw milk products. If patients have the recalled Cozy Vale Creamery products at home, let them know that they should not drink or use them and throw them away or return them to the place of purchase for a full refund.
- Consider asking patients who present with severe diarrhea, stomach cramps, and bloody stool if they have consumed raw milk products and obtaining a stool culture. STEC can also be transmitted via the fecal-oral route through direct contact with livestock, venison, undercooked beef, and produce that are cross-contaminated with cattle feces. Person-to-person transmission can occur. Symptoms can occur 1-8 days after exposure.
- Supportive therapy with hydration is usually sufficient to treat this infection. Most people recover within 5–10 days without antibiotics and most experts do not recommend the use of antibiotics for treatment. Some studies have shown that the use of antibiotics is associated with the development of hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) which is characterized by acute onset of microangiopathic hemolytic anemia, renal injury, and low platelet count. Antidiarrheal agents, such as loperamide (Imodium®), should also be avoided.
- Children with bloody diarrhea should be closely monitored for the development of HUS. If a complete blood cell count with smear, blood urea nitrogen and creatinine are normal 3 days after the resolution of diarrhea, it is unlikely HUS will develop.
- Immediately notify Thurston County Public Health about any suspect or confirmed cases of Shiga Toxin producing *E. coli* (STEC) by calling 360-867-2610 or 1-800-986-9050 after business hours.

### Background

There is currently an outbreak of Shiga Toxin-producing *E. coli* associated with raw milk products in Washington State. In mid-January and early February 2024, two (2) Washington residents in different counties were infected with the same, highly related strain of Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* or “STEC.” Both drank raw milk produced by Cozy Vale Creamery (Tenino, WA) shortly before becoming ill. Cozy Vale Creamery announced a recall of milk and cream products on February 16, 2024, because of contamination with STEC although this strain has not been associated with illnesses. An additional recall was announced on March 19, 2024, for raw milk and cream produced by the dairy with the best by dates of 03-18-24 through 03-28-24. A linked case of STEC has been identified in Thurston County.

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## Resources for Providers

- [2024 E. Coli Outbreak Linked to Raw Milk Consumption | Washington State Department of Health](#)
- [Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli \(STEC\) Notifiable Condition Guideline | WA DOH: Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli \(STEC\) \(including E. coli serotypes O157:H7 and non-O157\) \(wa.gov\)](#)
- [Cozy Vale Creamery Recall Notice, February 20, 2024, WSDA](#)
- [Food Recalls and Safety Alerts, WA DOH](#)
- [E. coli, WA DOH](#)
- [E. coli, FoodSafety.gov](#)
- [E. coli, CDC](#)

## THANK YOU FOR REPORTING

TO REPORT A NOTIFIABLE CONDITION IN THURSTON COUNTY	
Voice mail for reporting <b>non-immediately reportable conditions (24 hours a day):</b> <a href="#">Reporting a Notifiable Condition (thurstoncountywa.gov)</a>	Phone: <b>360-786-5470</b> Fax: 1-833-418-1916
<b>Day time immediately reportable conditions</b> – Calls are answered during business hours Monday-Friday 8am-5pm (excluding holidays) and routed to the appropriate communicable disease team member.	Phone: 360-867-2610 Secure eFax: 1-833-418-1916
<b>After hours immediately and 24-hour reportable conditions or a public health emergency</b>	Call 1-800-986-9050
No one is available with Thurston County Public Health and condition is <b>immediately notifiable or a public health emergency</b>	Call 1-877-539-4344

Communicable Disease Updates are posted online at: [Communicable Disease Updates \(thurstoncountywa.gov\)](#)