

THE E. COLI THREAT - GREATEST DURING SUMMER

The Wyckoff Board of Health advises the summer is the worst season for possible E. Coli bacteria's transmission to humans. All warm-blooded animals contain E. Coli bacteria. The problem is that when E. Coli comes into contact with food, pool or lake water, these bacteria can cause serious illness or even death in humans. These bacteria can be deadly to young people, the elderly or those with chronic illness.

The following are preventable measures that can be taken to prevent the spread of E. Coli:

- Outdoor barbecues feature hamburger, which if undercooked, can cause E. Coli in humans. Use a meat thermometer to cook meats to an internal temperature of 165 degrees F.
- Avoid cross-contamination from raw meats to finished foods such as salads or desserts.
- Always remember to wash hands completely - the FDA recommends 20 seconds with warm water, liquid soap and paper towels during food prep (between touching meats and other foods), changing diapers or for anyone with diarrhea.
- Fruits and vegetables should be washed thoroughly with soapy water before cutting - especially products like watermelon or cantaloupe that lie in the fields. The outside rind may be contaminated with E. Coli and drawing a knife through the rind will contaminate the flesh of the fruit.
- Avoid swallowing pool, lake, and ocean water due to the possibility of E. Coli bacteria. Children must be trained to use the toilet prior to playing/swimming in a pool and if children are in diapers or with diarrhea they should stay out of the water.
- In remote areas while camping, bring bottled water or check to see if municipal water is available at the tap.

For further information on E. Coli, call the Wyckoff Board of Health at 201-891-7000 ext. 304.