




INFORMATION UPDATE

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| TO: | Mayor and Members Board of Health |
| DATE: | September 18, 2020 |
| SUBJECT: | E. coli O157:H7 Associated with Valens Lake Conservation Area |
| WARD(S) AFFECTED: | City Wide |
| SUBMITTED BY: | Michelle Baird, Director, Epidemiology, Wellness and Communicable Disease Control Division Public Health Services |
| SIGNATURE: |  |

On the evening of September 17, 2020, Public Health Ontario (PHO) notified Hamilton Public Health Services (PHS) of an outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7 cases associated with Valens Lake Conservation Area. A total of seven cases of *E. coli* across five health units are part of the outbreak, with one of the six cases being a Hamilton resident. Six cases report visiting and swimming in the lake at Valens Lake Conservation Area in Hamilton. One case is pending follow-up. Given the clustering by age, with the majority of cases under the age of 12 years old, and temporal distribution, PHO has declared an outbreak.

E. coli (*Escherichia coli*) is a bacteria that, when consumed, can cause serious illness. In most cases, the illness is self-limiting, with symptoms such as diarrhea, fever, vomiting and abdominal cramps, but it may lead to a life-threatening disease including haemolytic uraemic syndrome (HUS), especially in young children and the elderly. *E. coli* is transmitted to a person most commonly through consumption of contaminated food or water.

PHO conducts genetic testing on *E. coli* specimens collected from cases in Ontario and through this process identified that the seven cases of *E. coli* were genetically linked to each other meaning each was likely exposed to the same source of infection as this was a single genetic strain of the bacteria.

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

A decision to close the swimming area at Valens Lake was made today in order to mitigate any further exposures at this site. PHS' staff communicated the concerns to the Hamilton Conservation Authority.

PHS continues to work with PHO as the investigation into this outbreak continues. An advisory to the medical community will be issued today and a media release is scheduled to follow this report.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Not Applicable.