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**For Immediate Release**  
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## **E. COLI OUTBREAK IN BUTTE COUNTY**

Butte County Public Health officials are investigating an outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7 infection in Butte County. Three cases have been confirmed and a fourth case is probable. Three of these cases have been hospitalized. The outbreak is linked to an event held in the community of Forest Ranch on September 6<sup>th</sup> from 12-6pm. The event was a fundraiser for the Forest Ranch Volunteer Fire Department. The source of contamination has not yet been identified.

Health officials are working to prevent further cases. It is very important that anyone who attended this event and became ill, and works in a high risk occupation, is asked to stop working until cleared to return to work by the Butte County Health Department. High risk occupations include food handlers, those who care for children, and those who give patient care. Call 891-2732 (during business hours) to speak with the Butte County Health Department staff about clearance to return to work. Anyone with symptoms should call their primary care physician or seek immediate medical attention.

*E. coli* O157:H7 is a potentially deadly bacterium that can cause bloody diarrhea, dehydration, and in the most severe cases, kidney failure. The very young, seniors and persons with weak immune systems are the most susceptible to this illness, but even healthy people can become very sick.

"We want to alert the public that anyone who attended the event in Forest Ranch on September 6th and is experiencing symptoms of diarrhea, should contact their health care provider immediately," stated Dr. Mark Lundberg, Health Officer for Butte County. "Even if your symptoms are mild, you could potentially spread the disease to someone else who could become very sick. Good hand washing is essential to preventing the spread of this infection, especially after using the bathroom and prior to preparing food."

Symptoms of *E. coli* O157:H7 illness includes stomach cramps, which can be severe, and diarrhea. Diarrhea begins as loose, watery stools, with stools often turning bloody within 1-3 days. *E. coli* O157:H7 disease sometimes leads to a serious complication called hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), which can include kidney failure.

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## E-coli Outbreak – 2

People typically become ill 3 -4 days after eating contaminated food. Treating *E. coli* disease with antibiotics should be avoided, because antibiotics can cause additional complications.

The time between ingesting the bacteria and feeling sick is called the “incubation period.” The incubation period is usually 3-4 days after the exposure, but may be as short as 1 day or as long as 10 days. The symptoms often begin slowly with mild abdominal pain or non-bloody diarrhea that worsens over several days. HUS, if it occurs, develops an average 7 days after the first symptoms, when the diarrhea is improving.

If you have any symptoms or are concerned that you may be ill, please contact your physician immediately.

For further information, contact: Dr. Mark Lundberg, Health Officer: (530) 538-7506,  
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### **Butte County Public Health Department**

Our Mission: To protect the public through promoting individual,  
community and environmental health.