

Six diagnosed in E.coli outbreak

Three toddlers and three others have been diagnosed with E.coli in an outbreak in Chester.

The Health Protection Agency are now screening over 120 children and 28 staff at the nursery two of the children attended in the city.

Four cases were initially found when two children and two of their parents were discovered to have the disease.

A third toddler and the 12-year-old sibling of another of the sick children have now also been diagnosed.

The Health Protection Agency said there is no evidence at this stage the nursery is the source of infection.

Infected meat

It said the nursery has high standards of cleanliness and good infection control procedures.

E. coli is a bacterium that can cause an infection of the bowel.

Symptoms can include diarrhoea, abdominal pain, raised temperature and shivering attacks.

It is spread from contact with animals or infected meat products and can spread from person-to-person. The incubation period is usually 1 to 6 days.

The disease can be prevented from spreading by washing hands after using the toilet and handling food.

'Precautionary approach'

Dr. Sam Ghebrehewet, Consultant in Communicable Disease Control with the Health Protection Unit, said: "We needed to be absolutely certain that no one is carrying an infection.

"So we asked parents to keep their children at home until they have produced two clear specimens.

"When we know that they are in the clear, they can return to the nursery. This is a precautionary approach and in-line with national guidelines.

"The new cases we have found are a sibling of one of the original cases who has no connection with the nursery and a child who had been ill some time ago and has since recovered."

Story from BBC NEWS:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/uk_news/england/merseyside/7027888.stm

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