



## **What's the big deal about E. coli and hamburgers?**

E. coli O157:H7 is a poisonous bacteria that produces large quantities of a potent toxin that forms in the intestine and causes severe damage to the lining of the intestine.

The actual infectious dose of this form of E. coli is unknown, but most scientists believe it takes only a small number of this strain of E. coli to cause serious illness and even death, especially in children.

E. coli O157:H7 bacteria survive refrigerator and freezer temperatures. Once they get in food, they can multiply at temperatures as low as 44 degrees F.

The bacteria are killed by thorough cooking.

Illnesses caused by E. coli O157:H7 have been linked with the consumption of undercooked ground beef. Raw milk, apple cider, dry cured sausage, fresh spinach, and undercooked roast beef have also been implicated.

Source: USDA