SHIGA TOXIN-PRODUCING *ESCHERICHIA COLI* (STEC) AND HEMOLYTIC-UREMIC SYNDROME (HUS)

I. DESCRIPTION AND EPIDEMIOLOGY

A. Overview

*Escherichia coli* are gram-negative bacteria that are commonly found in animal and human intestinal flora. *E. coli* are categorized into serotypes by antigens in their cell wall (somatic O antigen) and in their flagellae (H antigen). Most *E. coli* serotypes are not pathogenic to humans. Of the *E. coli* that cause disease, Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC), also known as enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* (EHEC) or verotoxin-producing *E. coli* (VTEC), can cause especially severe illness. STEC produce Shiga toxin 1 and/or Shiga toxin 2, potent toxins responsible for many of the pathogenic effects of STEC infection. The most widely recognized serogroup among STEC is O157; however, numerous other STEC serogroups which are often grouped together as non-O157 may cause illness similar to O157. STEC infections are associated with gastrointestinal disease characterized by abdominal cramps, diarrhea, and hemorrhagic colitis, and can be complicated by hemolytic-uremic syndrome (HUS).

B. STEC and HUS in California

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Infectious Diseases Branch (IDB) monitors cases and epidemiologic trends of STEC infections and post-diarrheal HUS in California and assists in the investigation of outbreaks and clusters. An IDB STEC subject matter expert (SME) reviews and verifies all STEC and HUS reports submitted by California local health departments (LHDs). Between 2011 and 2016, a range of 489-944 laboratory-confirmed cases of STEC infections were reported annually in California; the majority were sporadic infections rather than outbreak-related. The proportion of non-O157 STEC infections has steadily increased since non-O157 STEC reporting became mandatory in 2006, and currently accounts for the majority (approximately 65%) of all STEC infections reported in California. Fewer than 50 cases of HUS are reported per year; most are associated with STEC O157 infections. California STEC outbreaks in recent years have been associated with contaminated foods including undercooked ground beef, commercially packaged cookie dough, Gouda cheese, raw milk, pre-packaged salads and other leafy greens, and environmental exposures such as petting zoos and recreational water.

C. Symptoms

After ingestion, STEC colonize the intestine then release Shiga toxins which act locally or systemically to cause disease. Symptoms typically begin with abdominal cramps and non-bloody diarrhea, which frequently progress to bloody diarrhea. Nausea and vomiting may also be reported, but fever is generally low-grade or absent. Infection may also be mild or asymptomatic. The duration of uncomplicated gastroenteritis due to STEC infection is generally 4 to 10 days.
The most severe clinical manifestation of STEC infection is HUS, defined as a combination of hemolytic anemia, renal failure, and often a low platelet count. HUS complicates 2-15% of STEC O157 infections; children under 5 years of age are at highest risk. Another post-diarrheal complication of STEC is thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura (TTP) which has a similar clinical presentation as HUS but usually also includes fever and neurologic symptoms, such as altered mental status. HUS and TTP are more likely to be associated with STEC O157 than with STEC non-O157 infections.

D. Transmission

STEC is most often transmitted through the ingestion of undercooked food derived from infected animals or food contaminated by feces of an infected animal or person. Cattle may be asymptomatic but colonized with STEC and serve as the main reservoir for STEC. STEC has also been isolated from other animals, including deer, sheep, pigs, and goats. STEC has been documented to survive in the environment for months. Raw and improperly cooked or handled foods of animal origin such as beef and dairy products are the most common sources of STEC infection, but transmission has also occurred through the consumption of contaminated produce and ready-to-eat foods such as pre-packaged lettuce and nuts. Other potential modes of transmission include waterborne transmission by ingesting contaminated water, for example through drinking untreated well water or by swimming in a lake or under-chlorinated pool; direct contact with farm animals such as in petting zoos or at fairs; and person-to-person fecal-oral transmission, especially when diarrhea is present and hands are not washed adequately.

The infectious dose of STEC O157 is low; less than 100 organisms can cause infection. The risk of transmission exists for the duration of fecal excretion of organisms. Duration of shedding for adults is typically one week, but may be longer in children. Prolonged asymptomatic carriage is unusual.

E. Incubation Period

The incubation period is typically 3 to 4 days, but ranges from 1 to 10 days.

F. Clinical Management

The patient’s primary care physician or infectious disease specialist is responsible for clinical management decisions. Because some studies have found an association between the use of antimicrobials and the development of HUS, most experts, including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), do not recommend the routine use of antibiotics for treatment.
II. COUNCIL OF STATE AND TERRITORIAL EPIDEMIOLOGISTS (CSTE) SURVEILLANCE CASE DEFINITIONS

A. Shiga Toxin-Producing *Escherichia coli* 2018 Case Definition

The 2018 CSTE case definition for STEC can be found on the [CDC website](https://wwwn.cdc.gov/nndss/conditions/shiga-toxin-producing-escherichia-coli/case-definition/2018/).


**Clinical Criteria**

An infection of variable severity characterized by diarrhea (often bloody) and/or abdominal cramps. Illness may be complicated by HUS (note that some clinicians still use the term thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura [TTP] for adults with post-diarrheal HUS).

**Laboratory Criteria for Diagnosis**

**Confirmatory laboratory evidence**

- Isolation of *E. coli* O157:H7 from a clinical specimen OR
- Isolation of *E. coli* from a clinical specimen with detection of Shiga toxin or Shiga toxin genes

**Supportive laboratory evidence**

- Isolation of *E. coli* O157 from a clinical specimen without confirmation of H antigen, detection of Shiga toxin, or detection of Shiga toxin genes, OR
- Identification of an elevated antibody titer against a known Shiga toxin-producing serogroup of *E. coli*, OR
- Detection of Shiga toxin or Shiga toxin genes in a clinical specimen using a culture-independent diagnostic test (CIDT) and no known isolation of *Shigella* from a clinical specimen, OR
- Detection of *E. coli* O157 or STEC/Enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* (EHEC) in a clinical specimen using a CIDT

**Epidemiologic Linkage**

- A clinically compatible illness in a person that is epidemiologically linked to a confirmed or probable case with laboratory evidence, OR
- A clinically compatible illness in a person that is a member of a risk group as defined by public health authorities during an outbreak.
Criteria to Distinguish a New Case from an Existing Case

A new case should be created when a positive laboratory result is received more than 180 days after the most recent positive laboratory result associated with a previously reported case in the same individual. (See formula referenced in Appendix B of the 2017 CSTE Position Statement [17-ID-10] for details on time period calculation, hierarchy of dates and interpretation), OR

When two or more different serogroups/serotypes are identified in one or more specimens from the same individual, each serogroup/serotype should be reported as a separate case.

Case Classification

Suspected

- Identification of an elevated antibody titer against a known Shiga toxin-producing serogroup of *E. coli* in a person with no known clinical compatibility, OR
- Detection of Shiga toxin or Shiga toxin genes in a clinical specimen using a CIDT and no known isolation of *Shigella* from a clinical specimen in a person with no known clinical compatibility, OR
- Detection of *E. coli* O157 or STEC/EHEC in a clinical specimen using a CIDT in a person with no known clinical compatibility, OR
- A person with a diagnosis of post-diarrheal HUS/TTP (see HUS case definition).

Probable

- A person with isolation of *E. coli* O157 from a clinical specimen without confirmation of H antigen, detection of Shiga toxin or detection of Shiga toxin genes, OR
- A clinically compatible illness in a person with identification of an elevated antibody titer against a known Shiga toxin-producing serogroup of *E. coli*, OR
- A clinically compatible illness in a person with detection of Shiga toxin or Shiga toxin genes in a clinical specimen using a CIDT and no known isolation of *Shigella* from a clinical specimen, OR
- A clinically compatible illness in a person with detection of *E. coli* O157 or STEC/EHEC from a clinical specimen using a CIDT, OR
- A clinically compatible illness in a person that is epidemiologically linked to a confirmed or probable case with laboratory evidence, OR
- A clinically compatible illness in a person that is a member of a risk group as defined by public health authorities during an outbreak.

Confirmed

- A person that meets the confirmatory laboratory criteria for diagnosis.
B. Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome, Post-Diarrheal (HUS) 1996 Case Definition

The 1996 CSTE case definition for HUS, Post-Diarrheal may be found on the CDC website (https://wwwn.cdc.gov/nndss/conditions/hemolytic-uremic-syndrome-post-diarrheal/case-definition/1996/).


Clinical Description

Hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) is characterized by the acute onset of microangiopathic hemolytic anemia, renal injury, and low platelet count. Thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura (TTP) also is characterized by these features but can include central nervous system (CNS) involvement and fever and may have a more gradual onset. Most cases of HUS (but few cases of TTP) occur after an acute gastrointestinal illness (usually diarrheal).

Laboratory Criteria for Diagnosis

The following are both present at some time during the illness:

- Anemia (acute onset) with microangiopathic changes (i.e., schistocytes, burr cells, or helmet cells) on peripheral blood smear, AND
- Renal injury (acute onset) evidenced by either hematuria, proteinuria, or elevated creatinine level (i.e., greater than or equal to 1.0 mg/dL in a child aged less than 13 years or greater than or equal to 1.5 mg/dL in a person aged greater than or equal to 13 years, or greater than or equal to 50% increase over baseline)

Note: A low platelet count can usually, but not always, be detected early in the illness, but it may then become normal or even high. If a platelet count obtained within 7 days after onset of the acute gastrointestinal illness is not less than 150,000/mm³, other diagnoses should be considered.

Case Classification

Probable: An acute illness diagnosed as HUS or TTP that meets the laboratory criteria in a patient who does not have a clear history of acute or bloody diarrhea in preceding 3 weeks, OR

An acute illness diagnosed as HUS or TTP that a) has onset within 3 weeks after onset of an acute or bloody diarrhea and b) meets the laboratory criteria except that microangiopathic changes are not confirmed

Confirmed: An acute illness diagnosed as HUS or TTP that both meets the laboratory criteria and began within 3 weeks after onset of an episode of acute or bloody diarrhea

Comment(s)

Some investigators consider HUS and TTP to be part of a continuum of disease. Therefore, criteria for diagnosing TTP on the basis of CNS involvement and fever are not provided because cases diagnosed clinically as post-diarrheal TTP also should meet the criteria for HUS. These cases are reported as post-diarrheal HUS. Most
diarrhea-associated HUS is caused by Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli*, most commonly *E. coli* O157. If a patient meets the case definition for both shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) and HUS, the case should be reported for each of the conditions.

III. CASE SURVEILLANCE, INVESTIGATION, AND REPORTING

A. Purpose of Surveillance, Investigation, and Reporting

- To identify STEC outbreaks, recognize food and non-food vehicles, and interrupt potential sources of ongoing transmission
- To detect new and emerging STEC serotypes, and monitor epidemiologic trends
- To better understand the epidemiology of STEC infections and post-diarrheal HUS in California, and to develop targeted interventions to decrease rates of illness
- To educate people about how to reduce their risk of STEC infection

B. Local Health Department (LHD) General Case Investigation Recommendations

- Begin case investigation as soon as Shiga toxin-positive stool, STEC O157, STEC non-O157, or HUS is reported from a clinical laboratory or health care provider. Clinical laboratories and health care providers are required to report STEC infections immediately upon identification. Culture confirmation is not necessary to initiate the investigation. Note that other non-STEC *E. coli* that are part of many gastrointestinal CIDT panels are not reportable (IV. D. Special Considerations).

- The sooner a patient is interviewed, the better the recall of food and other exposures. While most STEC infections are sporadic, approximately 20 percent of cases in California that have undergone strain typing have been part of a recognized cluster. Most multi-jurisdictional clusters are identified through pulsed-field gel electrophoresis (PFGE) testing or whole genome sequencing (WGS), which are molecular subtyping techniques. Because of inherent delays in the current system, an isolate is often identified as part of a cluster several weeks after the presumed exposure has occurred. In order to improve the likelihood of determining the vehicle of an outbreak, it is helpful to try to get as much information as possible in the initial interview, and to document any activities which may help prompt recall later (such as a party or other significant event, or daily food diary in the week prior to illness onset).

- Interview case-patients using the CDPH STEC Case Report Form (III. C. LHD Reporting). Inform patient about the possibility of follow-up calls for additional information, especially if the patient is later identified to be part of a cluster or outbreak.
If the patient appears to be part of a point-source outbreak, follow your protocol for foodborne outbreak investigations. This should include notifying CDPH about the outbreak (III. C.).

If you require assistance with your case or outbreak investigation, call the CDPH IDB Disease Investigations Section (DIS) at 510-620-3434.

Ensure that the STEC isolate or Shiga toxin-positive specimen is saved and forwarded to the local public health laboratory or to the CDPH Microbial Diseases Laboratory (MDL) for serotyping and molecular subtyping (III. D. MDL Resources). This includes Shiga-toxin positive broths, if testing by the clinical or local public health laboratory (PHL) does not identify a pathogen or further testing was not performed.

C. LHD Reporting

LHD Reporting Overview

STEC O157 infections and post-diarrheal HUS have been reportable conditions in California since 1996. In 2006-7, infections due to STEC non-O157 and Shiga-toxin positive stool (without culture confirmation) were added to the Title 17 California list of reportable diseases, sections 2500 and 2505.

Effective January 1, 2018, CSTE updated the STEC surveillance case definitions (see IIA). In order to accommodate changes in the CSTE case definitions, CDPH updated the STEC and HUS reporting categories to the following:

- Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) with HUS
- Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) without HUS
- Hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) without evidence of STEC

Both CDC’s “Annual Tables of Infectious Diseases and Conditions” (https://wonder.cdc.gov/nndss/nndss_annual_tables_menu.asp) and California’s final case count for the Yearly Summary Reports include only confirmed and probable cases of “Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli*” and “hemolytic uremic syndrome post-diarrheal” that have been reviewed and closed by the CDPH STEC SME. It is therefore important that the LHD investigator completes all of the fields needed to appropriately classify and close a case to facilitate this process. These fields must be completed, whether entering the information into a STEC Case Report Form or CalREDIE record.

**Fields to Necessary to Correctly Classify an STEC Case:**

- The presence of clinically compatible symptoms
- The presence or absence of HUS (since the presence of HUS would be counted separately)
- Laboratory findings
  - Presence of Shiga toxin or H7 antigen for STEC O157
Final culture identification, if completed. For most STEC non-O157, this identification is done at a local PHL or MDL.

If culture was negative, or not done, please indicate accordingly.

Important Considerations:

- As long as there is clinically compatible illness, any person with a CIDT-positive result only (not culture-confirmed) should be reported as a probable STEC case. This is true regardless of the type of test (i.e., polymerase chain reaction [PCR] or enzyme immunoassay [EIA]) or performing laboratory (i.e., clinical laboratory or PHL). This is true even when PHL testing is negative, if the clinical laboratory testing indicated a CIDT-positive result.

- As of January 1, 2014 (see Section V, Applicable State Statutes), California Code of Regulations (Title 17, section 2505(l)) added Shiga-toxin positive broths as well as STEC O157 and non-O157 isolates to the list of specimens and isolates that must be saved and submitted by the clinical laboratory to a PHL. Therefore, the PHL confirmation questions in CalREDIE or the CDPH Case Report Form must be filled out.

- If the specimen was sent to MDL, the final test results are sent to the submitting laboratory, not necessarily the PHL of the patient’s residence. Please follow up with the submitting laboratory to verify final results. If the clinical laboratory did not forward the specimen/isolate to a PHL/MDL, notify the clinical lab that they are required to forward CIDT positive specimens or STEC isolates to a public health laboratory per Title 17 state regulations.

- CDPH tracks and analyzes STEC O157 and STEC non-O157 separately. This is due to differences in demographics and possibly exposures among persons infected with STEC O157 compared with STEC non-O157. Therefore, it is important to enter in the final serogroup identification.

Detailed Instructions for CalREDIE-participating Jurisdictions (see Appendix 1 and 2)

- Begin the case investigation and enter the patient information into CalREDIE upon notification of the case by a clinical laboratory or health care provider. All three STEC-related conditions are options in CALREDIE; please select the correct “Disease Being Reported”. The body of the case report form (i.e., the Clinical, Laboratory, Epidemiologic, and Case Investigation pages) is the same for all three conditions.

- In the Clinical Info tab, complete the symptom fields. Clinically compatible illness is defined as diarrhea, bloody diarrhea, and/or abdominal cramps, and is necessary when classifying a patient as a probable case when only CIDT results are available. Complete the HUS field. For patients with HUS, please answer each classification criteria (anemia with microangiopathic changes and renal injury) for proper resolution status (probable vs. confirmed). Please include the patient discharge summary in the EFC if available.
In the Laboratory Info tab, “CDPH MDL or Other Reference PHL Results” section, please indicate if the specimen/isolate was sent to a PHL and/or MDL. **Do not leave those fields blank.**

Indicate in the “CDPH MDL or other Reference PHL Results” section:
- **Shiga Toxin Test Result** (indicate Shiga toxin type if known)
- **Culture Result**; please do not leave this field blank!
  - Indicate culture result: confirm with your PHL, reference PHL, or MDL for the results if necessary.
  - Specify serogroup, if STEC is isolated; this includes the seven most common serogroups (O26, O45, O103, O111, O145, O121, and O157); if none of these serogroups were identified, the serogroup is considered to be “O-undetermined”, or O-UND
  - If the culture was negative, or not done, please indicate.

The laboratory information is crucial to properly categorize status. The case record cannot be closed by CDPH unless this information is included.
- If the Laboratory Information page is incomplete, it will be returned to the LHD.
- Uploading laboratory results to the electronic filing cabinet, especially PHL/MDL results, is encouraged, as this assists the STEC SME to properly categorize the Resolution Status.
- Clearance specimen results do not need to be entered into CALREDIE; only the details of the first positive result and PHL/MDL confirmation need to be entered.
- Do not enter “closed by LHD” in the process status until the final results from the PHL or MDL have been entered.

The CALREDIE report will NOT be reviewed by IDB STEC SME and “Closed by State” unless the process status is “Closed by LHD”, regardless of the resolution status. The “Closed by LHD” process status is the trigger for IDB to review the incident report.

**Instructions for CalREDIE NON-participating jurisdictions** (see Appendix 2)

- For LHDs not participating in CalREDIE, confidential morbidity report (CMR) and case report data must still be provided, including the information requested in the forms provided on the CDPH website:
  - [CMR, CDPH 110a](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/CDPH%20Document%20Library/ControlledForms/cdph110a.pdf)
  - [STEC and HUS Case Report Form, CDPH 8555](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/CDPH%20Document%20Library/ControlledForms/cdph8555.pdf)
The use of the STEC Case Report Form (CDPH 8555, revised 12/17) allows for the standardized collection of potential exposures for rapid comparison when clusters and outbreaks are identified.

- Fill out the STEC Case Report Form as completely as possible, especially for the fields needed for proper case classification, as specified above under “Instructions for CalREDIE participating jurisdictions”
- Please remember that the laboratory information is crucial to properly categorize status. The case record cannot be closed by CDPH unless this information is included. If the Laboratory Information section is incomplete, it will be returned to the LHD. When submitting the Case Report Form to the state, including the final PHL or MDL laboratory report is highly encouraged, as this assists the STEC SME properly categorize the Resolution Status. Clearance specimen results are not necessary.

**Reporting Outbreaks and Clusters**

Report suspected STEC outbreaks, including point-source outbreaks and PFGE/WGS clusters within your jurisdiction, immediately to CDPH.

- **CalREDIE-participating jurisdictions**: Create a new outbreak in CalREDIE. From the dropdown list for “Disease”, select the appropriate disease category such as “GI, Foodborne”, “GI, Waterborne”, “GI, Other/Unknown”, etc.
- **Non-participating jurisdictions**: For foodborne outbreaks, complete and submit the Foodborne Disease Outbreak Report form (CDPH 8567, https://www.cdph.ca.gov/CDPH%20Document%20Library/ControlledForms/cdph8567.pdf)

**D. Laboratory Considerations/ MDL Resources**

**Laboratory Testing Overview**

Most STEC O157 isolates can be identified accurately in the clinical laboratory because of their ability to grow in selective media. However, most clinical laboratories do not use selective media for the isolation of STEC non-O157, and therefore the PHL or MDL generally performs the STEC non-O157 serogroup identification.

Clinical laboratories are increasingly adopting CIDT, which is the detection of antigen or nucleic acid sequences of the pathogen without culture isolation. Use of CIDT to detect Shiga toxin or Shiga toxin genes has increased rapidly at clinical laboratories following U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval of several multiplex nucleic acid tests. These tests may indicate the presence of Shiga toxin or Shiga toxin genes, or the
presence of STEC, EHEC, or *E. coli* O157. While CIDT allows for timely public health response, isolation of the pathogen is needed for serogrouping and molecular characterization, which are both essential for public health action.

Title 17, California Code of Regulations requires clinical laboratories to submit STEC isolates and Shiga toxin-positive specimens or enrichment broths to a PHL as soon as possible for confirmation, isolation, and additional characterization. The local PHL will do additional testing, which includes Shiga toxin testing, identification of serogroup (STEC O157 and STEC non-O157), and strain typing, depending on capacity.

**CDPH MDL Resources**

- **Shiga-toxin (Stx) testing:** MDL receives Shiga toxin-positive broths, STEC isolates that are not serogrouped, and STEC O157 and non-O157 isolates. MDL will confirm the presence of Shiga toxin by PCR or Vero cell assay, including verifying the Shiga toxin type (1 or 2). PCR assays are used to detect Stx1 and Stx2 genes by many PHLs, including the CDPH MDL, for the diagnosis and confirmation of STEC infection. The Vero cell assay is a tissue culture technique that tests for cytopathic effect of Shiga toxin. This is a sensitive technique that is rarely used in clinical laboratories, but will be used at times by MDL.

  If either PCR or Vero cell assay fails to detect Shiga toxin, it will be reported out negative, and further identification will not be attempted.

- **Serogrouping:** If the specimen is Shiga toxin positive, MDL will attempt to isolate an STEC by culture and taking multiple colony picks. If STEC is isolated, MDL will attempt to serogroup by identifying the O antigen. If STEC is not isolated, it will be reported out as Shiga toxin positive only.

  In the United States, six non-O157 serogroups (O26, O45, O103, O111, O121, and O145) account for the majority of reported non-O157 STEC infections. MDL has the capacity to test for the presence five of these serogroups (O26, O145, O103, O111 and O121) as well as O157. Enteric identification of isolates that do not fall into these serogroups will be reported to the LHD as “*Escherichia coli* not O26, O103, O111, O121, O145, O157”. This designation is also referred to as STEC O-undetermined. MDL does not test STEC O157 isolates for the flagellar H antigen.

- **PFGE:** MDL performs PFGE on all STEC O157 isolates as soon as they are identified, and on non-O157 isolates as requested by CDC, IDB, or LHD staff. For STEC, PFGE testing is done by two restriction enzymes, XbaI and BlnI, to enhance specificity. If the XbaI and BlnI PFGE pattern combination is indistinguishable from that of at least 2 other STEC isolates in California, or are matches to known active clusters, MDL will notify an IDB epidemiologist, and the IDB epidemiologist will notify the LHD communicable disease control staff.

- **Multiple-Locus Variable Number Tandem Repeat Analysis (MLVA):** The use of MLVA has been discontinued as of 2018.
• **Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS):** MDL performs WGS on all STEC O157 isolates. WGS of non-O157 isolates is done per request from the CDC, IDB, or LHD staff. Sequences of isolates suspected to be part of a cluster are compared to one another using high-quality single nucleotide polymorphism (hqSNP) analysis to determine their relatedness. WGS analyses may be performed by MDL or CDC, and may also include detection of antibiotic resistance or virulence genes. Requests to MDL for WGS and data analysis are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

• MDL does not have access to CalREDIE, and provides Shiga toxin and serogroup testing results in writing to the PHL that submitted the specimen, not necessarily the case-patient’s jurisdiction of residence. It is the responsibility of the local PHL to notify the communicable disease control staff of the testing results, and ensure that the results are reported to the LHD of the patient’s residence. Of note, at this time, certain clinical laboratories send specimens directly to MDL. MDL will provide results to the clinical laboratory and to the Health Officer of the patient’s jurisdiction. The clinical laboratories should notify the LHD of residence of the case-patient about the testing results. It is the responsibility of the LHD to follow up with the appropriate laboratory for the final serogroup result and enter this information into the CalREDIE report or Case Report Form (III. C.).

### IV. CASE MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH CONTROL MEASURES

#### A. Management of Cases

All case-patients with STEC infection should be educated regarding disease transmission and appropriate infection control measures. In addition, patients should be instructed to monitor for signs and symptoms of HUS in the weeks following the onset of diarrhea.

Title 17 exclusion criteria for foodhandlers, childcare or eldercare workers, and health care workers do not apply to STEC infections. However, specific language for STEC infections is covered by the California Health and Safety Code Section 113949.1 which specifies particular actions for employees of food facilities. Details may be found in the Applicable State Statutes (Section V).

The California Association of Communicable Disease Controllers (CACDC) has proposed the following recommendations for the management of STEC case-patients, which are not bound by state regulations (and therefore left to the discretion of the Local Health Officer).

- For persons in sensitive occupations: Restrict/exclude until 2 negative stool specimens, taken at least 24 hours apart and at least 48 hours after cessation of antibiotics, are negative.
• For children 5 years and younger in a group setting (e.g., day care): Restrict/exclude until 2 consecutive stool specimens, taken at least 48 hours after antibiotics are stopped and at least 24 hours apart are negative.

For additional information, see the CACDC Enteric Disease Matrix (password protected).

Of note, STEC can be shed in stool for several weeks after the resolution of symptoms. In particular, young children shed for a greater duration, although chronic carriage is unusual. Nonetheless, the infectious dose, especially for STEC O157, tends to be quite low, and therefore, asymptomatic shedders are capable of infecting others.

B. Management of Contacts

There are no specific applicable codes guiding the management of contacts. The California Association of Communicable Disease Controllers (CACDC) has proposed the following recommendations for the management of symptomatic contacts to confirmed STEC case-patients, which are not bound by state statute (and therefore left to the discretion of the Local Health Officer). See CACDC Enteric Disease Exclusion Summary Chart for details. No restriction is recommended for asymptomatic contacts.

• For a symptomatic contact in a sensitive occupation: For persons in sensitive occupations who are a symptomatic contact to a confirmed or probable case: Restrict/exclude until 2 negative stool specimens, taken at least 24 hours apart and at least 48 hours after cessation of antibiotics, are negative.

• For symptomatic contact who is a child 5 years and younger in a group setting: Restrict/exclude until 2 negative stool specimens, taken at least 24 hours apart and at least 48 hours after cessation of antibiotics, are negative.

C. Infection Control Measures

Environmental inspection is indicated if a commercial food service facility, child care center, or public drinking water supply is suspected as the source of infection.

Hospitalized patients should be cared for using standard precautions. Contact precautions should be used for diapered or incontinent persons for the duration of the illness to control institutional outbreaks.

The case-patient should be educated regarding effective hand washing, particularly after using the toilet, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating food. The importance of proper hygiene must be stressed, as excretion of the organism may persist for several weeks.
D. Special Considerations

Available CIDT panels for gastrointestinal illness frequently detect more than one type of *E. coli*. Although several strains of *E. coli* are thought to cause human illness, most are not reportable to CDPH. At this time, only STEC is reportable; STEC is at times identified as enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* (EHEC) or verotoxin-producing *E. coli* (VHEC). Other *E. coli* on the panel include enterotoxigenic ECEC (ETEC), Enteropathogenic EC (EPEC) and Enteroaggregative EC (EAEC). These are not reportable to CDPH.

*Shigella spp.* is indistinguishable from enteroinvasive *E. coli* (EIEC) and is sometimes identified on the CIDT panel as *Shigella/EIEC*. This should be reported as a case of shigellosis.

Shiga toxin-producing *Shigella* has been documented in California since 2014. Cases reported to the LHD with positive results for both Shiga toxin and *Shigella* may be investigated as suspected cases of Stx-producing *Shigella*, though false-positive test results and coinfection with Stx-producing *E. coli* (STEC) and *Shigella* should also be considered. See the shigellosis chapter of CDPH IDB Guidance for Managing Select Communicable Diseases for additional details (https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/IDBGuidanceforCALHJs-Shigellosis.pdf).

V. APPLICABLE STATE STATUTES AND REGULATIONS

A. California Code of Regulations, Title 17, Public Health, Sections 2500, 2502:
(http://ccr.oal.ca.gov/linkedslice/default.asp?SP=CCR-1000&Action=Welcome)

2500: Health care providers are required to report Shiga toxin detected in feces, Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome, and Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* to the local health officer where the patient resides immediately by telephone.

2502: The Local Health Officer is required to report Shiga toxin detected in feces, Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome, and Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* to the state Department of Public Health at least on a weekly basis.

2505 (l): Assembly Bill 186, chaptered on October 7, 2011 amended the CA Health and Safety Code Section 120130 (b), required that the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) “establish a list of communicable diseases and conditions for which clinical laboratories shall submit a culture or a specimen to the local public health laboratory.”

This list has been added to California Code of Regulations, Title 17, Section 2505 (l) as of January 1, 2014:

“A culture of a specimen as listed in this subsection shall be submitted as soon as soon as available to the public health laboratory designated in Section 1065 for the local health jurisdiction where the health care provider is located.…. The cultures or
specimens pursuant to this requirement are….. Shiga toxin-positive fecal broths; Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) O157 and non-O157 isolates…..”

B. **California Health and Safety Code §113949.1**:  
(http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml)

“It is the intent of the Legislature to reduce the likelihood of foodborne disease transmission by preventing any food employee who is suffering from symptoms associated with an acute gastrointestinal illness, or known to be infected with a communicable disease that is transmissible through food, from engaging in the handling of food until the food employee is determined to be free of that illness or disease, or incapable of transmitting the illness or disease through food as specified in this article.”

Section 113949.1(a) “When a local health officer is notified of an illness that can be transmitted by food in a food facility or by an employee of a food facility, the local health officer shall inform the local enforcement agency. The local health officer or the local enforcement agency, or both, shall notify the person in charge of the food facility and shall investigate conditions and may, after the investigation, take appropriate action, and for reasonable cause, require any or all of the following measures to be taken……”

Section 113949.1(b) “For purposes of this section, “illness” means a condition caused by any of the following infectious agents… Enterohemorrhagic or Shiga toxin producing *Escherichia coli*.”

Section 113949.2. “The owner who has a food safety certificate issued pursuant to Section 113947.1 or the food employee who has this food safety certificate shall instruct all food employees regarding the relationship between personal hygiene and food safety, including the association of hand contact, personal habits and behaviors, and food employee health to foodborne illness. The owner or food safety certified employee shall require food employees to report the following to the person in charge: (a) If a food employee is diagnosed with an illness due to one of the following… Enterohemorrhagic or Shiga toxin producing *Escherichia coli*.”

## VI. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

A. **Food Safety**

Detailed food handling recommendations and details about USDA product testing and other information may be found on the USDA website:


B. **Public Health Training Tools**

- [2018 CDPH STEC reporting guidelines and references](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/2018-CDPH-STEC-Reporting-Guidelines-and-References.aspx)
C. General Information/ Patient Education

- CDPH STEC webpage (https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Shiga-toxin-producing-Escherichia-coli.aspx)
- CDC E. Coli webpage (http://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/)
- CDC videos on food safety (http://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/dfwed/medscape/foodsafety.html)

D. References

- CIFOR (Council to Improve Foodborne Outbreak Response) Guidelines (http://cifor.us/products/toolkit)
- Red Book Online. Section 3: Summaries of Infectious Diseases; Escherichia coli Diarrhea (http://aapredbook.aappublications.org/content/1/SEC131/SEC180.body?relatedurls=yes&legid=redbook;1/1/S03_42)

VII. UPDATES

Original version finalized and completed on January 12, 2015

July 2018: Revised to reflect changes in CSTE case definition and CDPH reporting categories
### Summary of LHD Action Steps: STEC and HUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Specific Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Begin case investigation as soon as STEC or HUS is reported** | - Review information in the CDPH IDB Guidance and STEC webpage as needed ([https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/2018-CDPH-STECCaseDefinitionGuidelines-and-References.aspx](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/2018-CDPH-STECCaseDefinitionGuidelines-and-References.aspx)).  
- Obtain and review clinical documentation, medical records, and lab reports as applicable.  
- Contact patient for interview. |
- Refer to Appendix 1: STEC Diagram for CDPH Case Classification and Reporting for additional guidance. |
| **Attempt to identify source of exposure.** | - Use the STEC and/or HUS case report form in CalREDIE or posted to the CDPH website ([CDPH 8555](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/CDPH%20Document%20Library/ControlledForms/cdph8555.pdf)) to guide your interview.  
- Include as many details that may later trigger memory, such as parties or special events, and inform patient that they may be contacted again.  
- If patient appears to be part of an outbreak, follow your protocol for foodborne outbreak investigations; this should include notifying CDPH about the outbreak. Report suspected STEC outbreaks within your jurisdiction to CDPH within 24 hours of identification. |
| **Implement control measures.** | - Determine if the patient is in a sensitive occupation (e.g., foodhandler or healthcare worker); administer appropriate infection control recommendations. See CACDC Enteric Disease Matrix ([https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/CACDC-Enteric-Disease-Matrix-2016-2017.pdf](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/CACDC-Enteric-Disease-Matrix-2016-2017.pdf)). |
| **Confirm status of STEC isolate or Stx + broth.** | - Stx-positive broths and STEC isolates must be saved and forwarded to a PHL for confirmation as per [Title 17, Section 2505 regulations](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Reportable-Disease-and-Conditions.aspx).  
- Ensure that the appropriate specimen has been sent to a local PHL or MDL for serogrouping and molecular subtyping. |
| **Report to CDPH Confirmed and probable STEC cases must be reported.** | The following fields **must** be filled out prior to submitting to the state:  
- Whether or not the patient had HUS.  
- Whether or not the isolate was forwarded to a PHL or to MDL  
- Stx status (positive or negative), including Stx type (1 and/or 2), if available. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Specific Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ☐ Ensure proper documentation. | • Culture results: Specify serogroup details (e.g., O157, O111, O26, or O-undetermined). If culture was negative or not done, indicate accordingly. Do not leave this field blank!  
• Select the appropriate “disease being reported” based on this information.  
• Complete above steps prior to closing the case by LHD or submitting to CDPH.  
• CalREDIE NPJs must also complete the Confidential Morbidity Report form (CDPH 110a). |

*If you require assistance with your investigation, call IDB Disease Investigations Section at 510-620-3434.*
APPENDIX 1

Shiga Toxin-Producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC)

2018 Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) Case Definition

Diagram for CDPH Case Classification and Reporting

A person with:
- Isolation of *E. coli* O157:H7 from a clinical specimen, OR
- Isolation of *E. coli* from a clinical specimen with detection of Shiga toxin or Shiga toxin genes

A person with isolation of *E. coli* O157 from a clinical specimen without confirmation of H antigen, detection of Shiga toxin, or detection of Shiga toxin genes

A person that is:
- Epidemiologically linked to a confirmed or probable case with laboratory evidence, OR
- A member of a risk group as defined by public health authorities during an outbreak

A person with:
- Detection of Shiga toxin or Shiga toxin genes in a clinical specimen using a culture-independent diagnostic test (CIDT) and no known isolation of *Shigella* from a clinical specimen, OR
- Detection of *E. coli* O157 or STEC/Enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* (EHEC) in a clinical specimen using CIDT, OR
- Identification of an elevated antibody titer against a known Shiga toxin-producing serogroup of *E. coli*

A person with diagnosis of post-diarrheal HUS/TTP

CLASSIFICATION

**CONFIRMED**

**HUS/TTP?**

YES

STEC WITH HUS (Confirmed)

NO

STEC WITHOUT HUS (Confirmed)

**PROBABLE**

**HUS/TTP?**

YES

STEC WITH HUS (Probable)

NO

STEC WITHOUT HUS (Probable)

**NOT A CASE**

YES

**SUSPECTED**

Clinically compatible illness?

YES

STEC WITHOUT HUS (Suspected)

NO

HUS WITHOUT EVIDENCE OF STEC

NO

**SUSPECTED**

Clinically compatible illness?

YES

STEC WITH HUS (Probable)

NO

HUS WITHOUT EVIDENCE OF STEC

**NOT A CASE**

**Note:** Isolation or detection by any laboratory should be used for case classification, even when clinical and public health laboratory results are discordant

1For STEC CSTE case definition, see https://wwwn.cdc.gov/nndss/conditions/shiga-toxin-producing-escherichia-coli/case-definition/2018/


3Clinically compatible illness includes one or more of the following: diarrhea (three or more loose stools within 24 hours), bloody diarrhea, abdominal cramps, hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS)

4Case is considered Suspected STEC but should be reported to CDPH as “HUS without evidence of STEC”
Appendix 2: Guide to Important CalREDIE fields

Critical fields are circled.

**PATIENT TAB**

1) Please verify the disease being reported. There are three STEC associated fields: STEC **with** HUS, STEC **without** HUS, HUS without evidence of STEC.

**CLINICAL INFO TAB**

2) Clinically compatible symptoms (diarrhea, bloody diarrhea, and/or abdominal cramps) are necessary when classifying a probable case with CIDT positive results but not culture confirmed. Please check that onset date is before or on the date of diarrhea onset.

- Symptomatic?
- Onset date
- Diarrhea
- Bloody diarrhea
- Fever
- Vomiting
- Abdominal cramps
- Other
3) Indicate if the patient had HUS. HUS has a case definition, which includes anemia with microangiopathic changes. Please answer the first two questions pertaining to HUS for patients who had HUS (anemia, renal injury). Thrombocytopenia is a common finding, but not necessary to confirm a case. The diagnosis of HUS should also be included in the hospital discharge records. Please include any hospital records in the EFC.

4) Indicate if patient was hospitalized, especially for patients with HUS. Include the discharge diagnoses, and upload the discharge summary into the EFC if available.
LABORATORY INFO TAB

5) If the clinical laboratory results were not submitted through ELR, fill out the Clinical Laboratory results. The results in this section refers to clinical laboratory results, not PHL results.

6) After filling out the clinical laboratory information, SCROLL DOWN to the CDPH MDL or other PHL results section. This is very important! The form will be returned to the LHD if this is left blank. This section refers to the public health
laboratory, either at the local level or MDL, that made the final identification (i.e., Stx positive or negative, STEC O157, STEC non-O157, culture negative)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CDPH MICROBIAL DISEASES LABORATORY (MDL) OR OTHER REFERENCE PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY (PHL) RESULTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ID: 001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Was isolate or broth forwarded to a local public health lab?**  
- Yes  
- No  
- Unknown

**Was isolate or broth forwarded to MDL?**  
- Yes  
- No  
- Unknown

Per Title 17, clinical labs are required to forward Stx positive isolates or broths to a public health laboratory. Please follow up with the clinical laboratory to determine if this was done. If specimen was not forwarded, the clinical lab is in violation of state regulations.

With a few exceptions, serogroup confirmation for STEC non-O157 is done by MDL. Most isolates are therefore forwarded to MDL for serogrouping and strain typing.

Enter in the shiga toxin results from the final PHL doing the testing (usually MDL). If the PHL has indicated that the specimen was forwarded to MDL, enter in the final MDL results.

7) If shiga toxin is negative, many PHLs will not forward the specimen to MDL. If that is the case, the shiga toxin results, should be marked as negative, and culture result should be noted as “not done”. If a culture was attempted by the PHL/MDL, and it was negative, indicate “negative” on the culture result.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture result</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If <em>E. coli</em> O157, specify flagellar (H) antigen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If <em>STEC</em> non-O157, specify serogroup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do not leave this blank; options are *STEC* O157, *STEC* non-O157, NOT DONE, and NEGATIVE. Follow up with the submitting laboratory for final results. This is very important for proper classification.

Enter in the final serogroup determination using the drop-down menu. Upload the final PHL results into the ELC.