

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Contacts:

### **Matt Willis, MD, MPH**

Public Health Officer  
Health and Human Services  
899 Northgate Drive  
Suite 104  
San Rafael, CA 94903  
415 473-4163 T  
CRS Dial 711  
[MWillis@marincounty.org](mailto:MWillis@marincounty.org)  
[www.marinhhs.org](http://www.marinhhs.org)

### **Rebecca Ng**

DIRECTOR  
Environmental Health  
Services  
899 Northgate Drive  
Suite 236  
San Rafael, CA 94903  
415 473-6907 T  
CRS Dial 711  
[rng@marincounty.org](mailto:rng@marincounty.org)  
[www.marinhhs.org](http://www.marinhhs.org)

## **Marin E. Coli Investigation Winds Down**

*No single source of the infection has been identified*

**San Rafael, CA** – The [Marin County Department of Health and Human Services](http://www.marincounty.org/health-and-human-services) (HHS) and [Environmental Health Services](http://www.marincounty.org/environmental-health-services) has concluded its investigation of a [previously reported outbreak of Escherichia coli O157](#), an infection acquired by eating food contaminated with the bacteria.

There were six confirmed E. coli cases in Marin and there have been no new cases since mid-September. Three of the affected individuals lived in Tiburon, and one each in San Rafael, Inverness and San Anselmo. Four of the patients were children and four were hospitalized (two children and two adults). All patients have been discharged and are recovering or fully recovered.

"There is no ongoing risk to the public's health," said Dr. Matt Willis, Marin County Public Health Officer. No single food type was identified as the source of the six infections.

There are up to 10 documented cases of E. coli O157 infection annually in Marin, usually in isolated cases or small clusters.

"In most small outbreaks a specific food source is never identified," Willis said. "There may be brief exposure for a limited number of people, and the potentially contaminated food is often gone before the investigation begins. That's why it's so important for everyone to practice safe food storage and handling every day."

Environmental Health Services, a division of the County's Community Development Agency, did not recommend the closure of any dining establishments or stores in relation to the E. coli cases.

"Although this was a relatively small outbreak, we understand that this is a big concern to Marin residents," said Rebecca Ng, Director of Environmental Health Services. "If there is ever a threat to public health, we would communicate that risk immediately and close a facility if necessary."

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E. coli infection usually occurs by eating foods containing the bacteria, and the people most at risk for serious illness are children and older adults or others living with weakened immune systems.

Residents are reminded to follow good food hygiene practices, including washing hands with soap and water after changing diapers, using the bathroom and before preparing food or eating. Safe food-handling includes cooking meats thoroughly and washing hands, counters, cutting boards and utensils after touching raw meat.

Marin County provides [public health updates](#) regularly on its public website, and individuals seeking up-to-date information on issues affecting Marin can subscribe to that page to receive e-mailed updates. Additionally, [food facility inspections](#) by Environmental Health Services are available online.

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