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COMMUNITY HEALTH AGENCY ■ DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
■ DISEASE CONTROL BRANCH

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SHIGA TOXIN IN FECES NOW REPORTABLE IN CALIFORNIA

The California Department of Health Services has made the detection of Shiga toxin (STX) in feces reportable by health care providers and laboratories. Effective immediately, shiga toxin in feces must be reported to Riverside County Department of Public Health immediately by telephone. Telephone reports should be called to (951) 358-5107. Cases of hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) must also be reported.

This requirement follows a multi-state outbreak of E coli 0157 linked to spinach. As of October 2006, over 200 cases have been reported nationally with 3 deaths. One case of E coli 0157 linked to the outbreak has been reported in Riverside County.

Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* is a type of enterohemorrhagic E. coli (EHEC) bacteria that can cause illness ranging from mild intestinal disease to severe kidney complications. Other types of enterohemorrhagic E. coli include the relatively important serotype E. coli 0157:H7, and more than 100 other non-0157 strains such as O111 and O26.

Typical symptoms include severe abdominal cramping, sudden onset of watery diarrhea, frequently bloody, and sometimes vomiting and a low-grade fever. Most often the illness is mild and self-limited generally lasting 1-3 days. However, serious complications such as hemorrhagic colitis, Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS), or postdiarrheal thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura (TTP) can occur in up to 10% of cases. Approximately 90% of cases of diarrhea-associated HUS are attributed to E. coli 0157:H7. The incubation period ranges from 2-10 days with an average of 3-4 days.

Isolates or stool specimens should be submitted to the Public Health lab for confirmatory testing. Please contact the Public Health Lab director at (951) 358-5070, for questions of specimen submission.

Questions on the reporting requirements should be directed to Disease Control at 951 358-5107.