

Maine expanding probe into E. coli after 1-year-old boy dies

October 9 2015, byPatrick Whittle

Maine public health authorities confirmed Friday that one child—identified by his father as a 20-month-old boy from the town of Poland—has died and another was hospitalized after both attended a county fair and then showed symptoms of E. coli infection.

The Poland child's father, Androscoggin County Sheriff's Deputy Jon Guay, said his son Colton died of [hemolytic uremic syndrome](#), or HUS, after visiting the fair last month. HUS is a potential complication of E. coli infection.

Authorities also said they are expanding their investigation into the two cases. The children are both from Androscoggin County and likely acquired their illnesses from the same source, state epidemiologist Siiri Bennett said.

Bennett said both children attended the Oxford County Fair last month, but the state is also searching for other common factors in the cases. She said it will take a week to complete testing of samples from the fair.

"We need to see if there are other commonalities that could also be a possible source," Bennett said. "There are multiple parts to this investigation so we can make sure there is no ongoing threat."

The state's Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory identified the strain of E. coli in the two cases to be identical in both patients, Bennett said.

The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention declined to release more details about the individual cases. Maine Medical Center in Portland said the sickened child, Myles Herschaft of Auburn, is in fair condition at the hospital.

The state had between 20 and 33 cases of E. coli every year from 2010 to 2014. Bennett said there have been six cases of HUS in Maine this year.

Symptoms of E. coli infection include diarrhea, abdominal cramps, nausea and vomiting. The agency has said the best defense against the bacterial illness is to thoroughly wash hands with soap and water.

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