

DHEC Update (June 8, 2015): Greenwood County STEC Investigation

The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) has provided the following update to a STEC investigation in Greenwood County:

- As of today, DHEC has **confirmed eight (8) cases** of Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) associated with The Learning Vine daycare in Greenwood County.

As part of this ongoing investigation, DHEC today:

- Continued to collect and test samples for laboratory analysis
- Provided information to individuals affected by the investigation
- Continued to operate a hotline to provide assistance to those affected
- Worked with the S.C. Department of Social Services to provide information to daycare facilities in Greenwood, Laurens, and Abbeville Counties
- Notified individuals of their test results

At this time, no other facility is included as part of this ongoing investigation.

How does DHEC confirm the diagnosis of STEC and the specific strain?

Confirmatory testing for STEC in individuals who have had diarrhea requires stepwise laboratory processes to isolate the organism from stool. If bacteria are isolated, the laboratory must grow the specimen to get a sample to conduct additional laboratory procedures to identify if specific STEC strains are present. **Completion of the entire process may take up to a week for specific strain identification.** To date, four (4) of the samples have undergone complete strain identification and these have a matching pattern.

When will the daycare be able to reopen?

The following criteria must be met prior to students and staff returning to the facility:

- All students and staff must be tested for Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) and have at least one negative stool sample before returning to the facility. Some individuals may be required to have two negative stool samples before returning to the facility based on their history of illness or contact with cases.
- The facility must continue to follow all recommendations issued by DHEC.

For more information about STEC and how to prevent it, visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/general/index.html>.

**Note to reporters and editors: Information resulting from this investigation will be provided as it is confirmed, and in accordance with state and federal law. Due to federal privacy restrictions, DHEC is unable to provide additional information concerning any individual, including details about physical condition, hospitalization, age, sex, and residence.*

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