



NEWS RELEASE

Kern County Department of Public Health

5/14/07 UPDATE: E. COLI ILLNESSES

Contact Person:

Daniel Kim, MPH, CHES
Director, Health Promotion and Public Information
(661) 868-0327

May 14, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

B. A. Jinadu, M.D., M.P.H., Kern County Health Officer and Director of Public Health Services, would like to announce the status of the current investigation into the E. coli illnesses.

The Department of Public Health is following up on information on a 2 year old who was seen on Friday with symptoms of diarrhea and who was exposed to one of the children from the same social circle and within the same time frame.

“Our investigation revealed that there were certain events and activities that are critical and would explain the E. coli illnesses,” says Dr. Jinadu.

After a thorough investigation, the Department of Public Health has identified that an initial exposure occurred on 4/26 during a water slide event, a known source of E. coli exposure in such a situation. This started the chain of an infectious process which stretched from 4/26 - 5/4, where some of the cases became ill following these events. This is consistent with the incubation period for E. coli.

Another significant event occurred on 4/29 during which the same social circle attended that event. This proves to be an event point for secondary infections.

The evidence also supports that the two (2) cases that showed symptoms on 4/27, a day following the water slide event, appeared to have been exposed at an earlier date and were infectious at the time of that event. One of the cases is considered the starting point for the investigation.

The Department of Public Health continues to explore the point of exposure of the index case. However, it is not unusual in similar types of outbreaks that the initial point of exposure may never be identified.