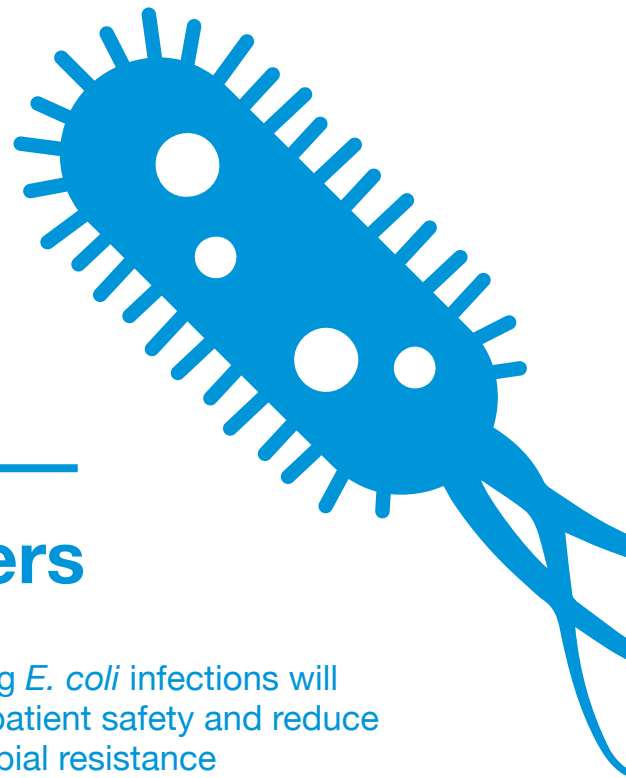


# Reducing bloodstream infections



## Why tackling *E. coli* matters

Bloodstream infections caused by *E. coli* have increased considerably in recent years, and up to a quarter of patients can die from serious *E. coli* infections<sup>1</sup>

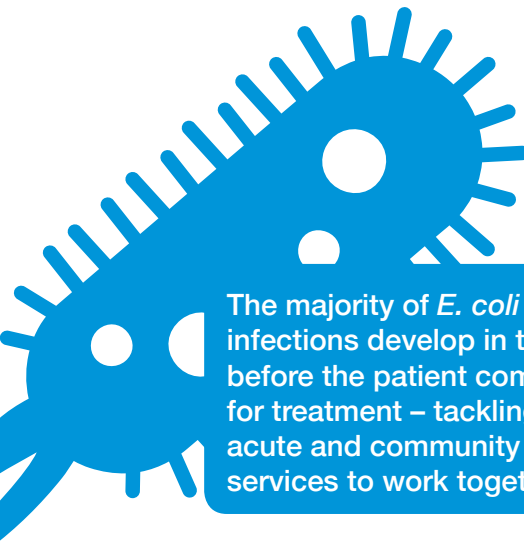
Preventing *E. coli* infections will improve patient safety and reduce antimicrobial resistance

### Understanding *E. coli*

- Everyone carries the *E. coli* organism – it's a common bacteria and normally lives in the gut. But it can cause problems if it gets into other parts of the body
- *E. coli* most commonly causes infection of the urinary tract and kidneys – it can also infect wounds, cause infection in the gut, and respiratory infections such as pneumonia. In some cases, the *E. coli* infection spreads into the bloodstream
- *E. coli* are becoming increasingly resistant to antibiotics

### How you can help to prevent *E. coli* infections

- 70% of *E. coli* bloodstream infections are caused by urinary tract infections (UTIs), especially in older people. To reduce the risk of UTIs:
  - Help people stay hydrated (especially those who need assistance to drink) as flushing urine through the bladder helps to ensure bacteria can't survive
  - Encourage patients who are worried about incontinence to drink plenty and ensure they are given help to use the toilet
  - Minimise use of urinary catheters as they significantly increase the risk of UTIs
  - Follow recommended criteria to diagnose UTIs and use appropriate antibiotics to treat them
- Other key ways to prevent *E. coli* infections:
  - Apply the highest infection prevention standards when managing invasive devices such as IV lines, urinary catheters and respiratory equipment
  - Ensure recommendations to prevent infection of surgical wounds are applied rigorously and that all wounds are managed aseptically
  - Encourage and support good oral care such as regular tooth brushing and dental check-ups, to help prevent harmful bacteria getting into the respiratory tract



The majority of *E. coli* bloodstream infections develop in the community, before the patient comes into hospital for treatment – tackling them requires acute and community healthcare services to work together

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[https://improvement.nhs.uk/documents/984/Gram-negative\\_JPCresource\\_pack.pdf](https://improvement.nhs.uk/documents/984/Gram-negative_JPCresource_pack.pdf)

1 Vihita, 2018