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Initial adherence of *EPEC, EHEC* and *VTEC* to host cells

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Initial adherence to host cells is the first step of the infection of enterohaemorrhagic *Escherichia coli* (*EHEC*), enteropathogenic *Escherichia coli* (*EPEC*) and verotoxigenic *Escherichia coli* (*VTEC*) strains. The importance of this step in the infection resides in the fact that (1) adherence is the first contact between bacteria and intestinal cells without which the other steps cannot occur and (2) adherence is the basis of host specificity for a lot of pathogens. This review describes the initial adhesions of the EHEC, EPEC and VTEC strains. During few years, several new adhesions and putative colonization factors have been described, especially in EHEC strains. Only a few adhesions (BfpA, AF/R1, AF/R2, Ral, F18 adhesions) appear to be host and pathotype specific. The others are found in more than one species and pathotype (EPEC, EHEC and VTEC). Initial adherence of EPEC, EHEC and VTEC strains to host cells is probably mediated by multiple mechanisms.

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