



Mono County Health and Human Services

County Health Department Advises Consumers not to Eat Fresh, Bagged Spinach Because it May Be a Possible Cause of a Multistate E. Coli Outbreak

By: Dr. Richard Johnson, P.H.O.
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County Public Health Officer Dr. Richard Johnson today warned consumers not to eat fresh, bagged spinach because it may be a possible cause of a multistate outbreak of E. coli. To date, 49 illnesses, including one death in Wisconsin, have been reported to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The California Department of Health Services (CDHS) is investigating an illness in the state that may be associated with the outbreak.

"The California Department of Health Services is extremely concerned about this outbreak," Johnson said. "They are aggressively investigating possible sources of this outbreak with the federal Food and Drug Administration."

A multistate investigation coordinated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and CDC has determined that the illnesses may be associated with fresh, bagged spinach of unknown origin. CDHS is working closely with FDA to identify possible sources of the bagged spinach associated with the illnesses.

States that have reported illnesses to CDC to date include Connecticut, Idaho, Indiana, Michigan, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah and Wisconsin.

E. coli infection often causes abdominal cramps and bloody diarrhea. A small percentage of infected individuals also develop hemolytic uremic syndrome, a condition in which red blood cells are destroyed and kidney failure may occur. There is usually little or no fever, and the illness typically resolves itself in five to 10 days. Those most at risk for serious complications of this food-borne illness include young children, the elderly and those with compromised immune systems. Consumers should seek immediate medical care if they develop these symptoms.



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