



E-coli Illness Associated with Romaine Lettuce

Talking Points

11.21.18

A strain of E.coli that has infected 32 people in 11 states and 18 people in Canada has been linked to Romaine lettuce.

- Illness started on dates ranging from October 8, 2018 to October 31, 2018.
- 13 people were hospitalized, including one who developed hemolytic uremic syndrome, a type of kidney failure. No deaths have been reported.
- There have been no cases associated with this strain reported in Iowa. Even so, public health in Iowa continues to do its routine surveillance for this kind of infection.

CDC, federal and state partners are working to identify the source of the Romaine lettuce, but for safety, CDC is advising that all types of Romaine lettuce (whole heads, hearts of Romaine, bag, boxes and pre-cut salad mixes that contain Romaine, baby Romaine or any type of Romaine) be thrown away.

- If you're not sure if lettuce is Romaine or if a salad mix contains Romaine, do not eat it and throw it away.
- Wash and sanitize drawers or shelves in refrigerators where Romaine was stored.
 - Wipe shelving, drawers and any other removable parts by hand with warm, soapy water. Do the same for non-removable parts.
 - Dry with a clean towel.
 - Optional: after cleaning with warm, soapy water, wipe down the inside of the refrigerator using a solution of 1 tablespoon bleach in 1 gallon of water.
 - Remember to wash your hands with warm water and soap when you are finished cleaning.
 - Wash any towels you used to dry the refrigerator before using them again.

Take action if you have symptoms of E. coli infection.

- Call your healthcare provider if your symptoms include:
 - Severe stomach cramps
 - Diarrhea (often bloody)
 - Vomiting
 - Some people may have a fever, which usually is not very high (less than 101°F). Most people get better within 5 to 7 days. Some infections are very mild, but others are severe or even life-threatening.
- Write down what you ate in the week before you started to get sick.
- Call your local health department and answer their questions about your illness.
- Most people start feeling sick 3 to 4 days after eating or drinking something that contains the bacteria. However, illnesses can start anywhere from 1 to 10 days after exposure.