

NEWS RELEASE

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***E. Coli* Outbreak Possibly Linked to Romaine Lettuce**

Do not buy or eat romaine lettuce from the Salinas growing region

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the Department of Agriculture (USDA), as well as public health and regulatory officials in other states to investigate a multistate outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7 infections possibly linked to lettuce. A total of 40 cases have been identified in 16 states, including one case in Illinois who was hospitalized.

“Tens of thousands of people get sick every year in the U.S. from foodborne illnesses, and approximately 3,000 die,” said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. “We will continue to work with state and national health officials to investigate this ongoing outbreak in an effort to prevent additional cases and potential deaths.”

The CDC is recommending people not eat romaine lettuce from the Salinas growing region in California. When buying romaine lettuce, check the labeling to see if it says Salinas. If it does, or there is no label, do not buy that romaine lettuce. Similarly, if you have romaine lettuce at home that indicates it is from the Salinas growing region, or you don’t know where it is from, do not eat the lettuce and throw it out. Additional information can be found on the [CDC website](#).

Additionally, Missa Bay, LLC. has recalled ready-to-eat salad products that contain meat or poultry because the lettuce may be contaminated with *E. Coli* O157:H7. The products subject to the recall can be found on the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service [website](#). These products were distributed in Illinois as well as in 21 other states. If consumers still have these products in their refrigerators, they should throw them out.

The investigation is ongoing to determine other potential sources of contamination and if additional products are linked to illness.

Symptoms of infection vary for each person, but often include severe stomach cramps, bloody diarrhea, and vomiting. Anyone with symptoms, especially if they are severe, should seek medical care and alert medical providers that you have recently eaten romaine lettuce. More information can be found on the IDPH website, [E. Coli](#) page.

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