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Contact

Clinton Bennett, DHSS: (907) 269-4996, clinton.bennett@alaska.gov

Lorinda Lhotka, DEC: (907) 451-2119, lorinda.lhotka@alaska.gov

Officials recommend discarding all romaine lettuce due to new multistate outbreak of *E. coli*; no Alaska cases reported

Nov. 20, 2018 ANCHORAGE, AK – The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are investigating a multistate outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7 illnesses likely linked to the consumption of romaine lettuce.

CDC is reporting that 32 cases of *E. coli* O157:H7 infection have been identified in residents of 11 states since early October; 13 people have been hospitalized, and no deaths have been reported. No cases have been detected in Alaska.

Because details about specific romaine lettuce distributors or producers are not yet known, the CDC and FDA recommend that people should not consume *any* romaine lettuce until further information can be obtained. This includes whole head romaine, precut lettuce, hearts of romaine in bags and mixed salads that contain romaine. Retailers and restaurants should not offer for sale or serve any romaine until more is known about this outbreak.

Symptoms of *E. coli* O157:H7 infection include stomach cramps, diarrhea (often bloody) and vomiting. Occasionally, more serious complications can occur, including kidney failure and death. Alaskans should talk to a health care provider if they have symptoms of *E. coli* infection.

For more information:

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/2018/o157h7-11-18/index.html>

FDA: <https://www.fda.gov/Food/RecallsOutbreaksEmergencies/Outbreaks/ucm626330.htm>

Department of Environmental Conservation – Food safety and product recall (Lorinda Lhotka, 907-451-2119 lorinda.lhotka@alaska.gov)

Department of Health and Social Services – *E. coli*, health concerns (Clinton Bennett, 907-269-4996, clinton.bennett@alaska.gov)

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