

For immediate release: June 8, 2018

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Advisory: Cut Melons Linked to Foodborne Illness in Michigan

Consumers urged to throw away potentially contaminated foods

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), and local health departments are working closely with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and public health and regulatory officials in several states to investigate a multistate outbreak of *Salmonella* Adelaide linked to consumption of cut melons.

Most people who have been infected with this strain of *Salmonella* bought pre-cut melon at Walmart or Kroger stores in the Midwest. Consumers who have purchased pre-cut melon from Walmart or Kroger, including fruit salad mixes with melon, are urged not to eat it and throw it away. Walmart and Kroger are cooperating fully with the investigation and have removed all cut melon associated with this outbreak. The CDC is not recommending people avoid whole melons.

To date, 60 people infected with the outbreak strain have been reported in five states, including 32 cases in Michigan. Of the 60 cases reported, 31 (66%) have been hospitalized due to illness associated with the infection. No deaths have been confirmed to date. Other states that have reported illnesses as part of this outbreak include Illinois (6 cases), Indiana (11 cases), Missouri (10 cases), and Ohio (1 case). Illnesses started on dates ranging from April 30, 2018 to May 28, 2018, and cases range in age from less than 1 to 97 years old.

Most persons infected with *Salmonella* develop diarrhea, fever, and abdominal cramps 12 to 72 hours after being exposed to the bacteria. The illness usually lasts 4 to 7 days, and most people recover without treatment. The elderly, infants, and those with weak immune systems are more likely to have a severe illness. In rare cases, *Salmonella* infection can cause death unless the person is treated promptly with antibiotics. Individuals who believe they may have become ill with *Salmonella* should contact their health care provider.

This investigation is expanding rapidly. The FDA is working to identify a supplier of pre-cut melon to stores where ill people shopped. CDC's advice to consumers may expand to include other stores where contaminated pre-cut melon was sold. Updates on this national outbreak investigation will be posted as they become available on the CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/salmonella/outbreaks-active.html

More information and steps to take to reduce the risk of infection can be found on the CDC *Salmonella* website at www.cdc.gov/salmonella/.

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Editors Note: Food safety tips when preparing any fresh produce (adapted from FDA):

- Rinse raw produce, such as fruits and vegetables, thoroughly under running tap water before eating, cutting, or cooking. Even if the produce will be peeled, it should still be washed first;
- Scrub firm produce with a clean produce brush;
- Dry produce with a clean cloth or paper towel;
- Purchase produce that is not bruised or damaged;
- When selecting pre-cut produce — such as a half a watermelon or bagged salad greens — choose only those items that are refrigerated or surrounded by ice;
- Bag fresh fruits and vegetables separately from meat, poultry, and seafood products when packing them to take home from the market; and,
- Check that your refrigerator is clean and is set at 40° F or below.

For more food safety tips, visit: www.foodsafety.gov.