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IN THE NEWS

E. Coli O157:H7 in Lettuce Update as of May 9, 2018

Updated Information:

The last update from the CDC on the E. Coli contamination of Romaine Lettuce was posted on 5/9/18 and contained an update of cases and states reported through 5/8/18.

To date, there are 149 cases of E Coli O157:H7 in 29 states. Of the 129 cases with **known information**, there have been 64 hospitalizations (50%), 17 cases of hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), and one (1) death in California. Reported illnesses fall between March 13, 2018 and April 25, 2018. Since there is a 2-3-week lag time between infection of an individual to when the case is reported, these numbers may not include all cases that occurred after April 17.

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) reported on May 9, 2018, that there are six (6) Canadians from four different Provinces (Ontario, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Alberta) with E. Coli O157:H7 that is genetically like the current E. Coli outbreak in the United States. The Canadian cases fall into date range of late March through the middle of April. Two of the Canadian's reported eating romaine lettuce while traveling in the United States; three report eating romaine either at home or in prepared salads in grocery stores or restaurants, and the remaining case is still being investigated. One person was hospitalized but it is reported that all have recovered from their illnesses. Canada reports that if they are selling contaminated lettuce in their country, it will be recalled. Otherwise, those that are traveling to the US or travel over the border to grocery shop, should follow current CDC advice.

Although 29 states have recorded cases, all the states except the following, have only 1-3 cases each. Those with more than 3 cases include Alaska (8), Arizona (8), California (30), Georgia (5), Idaho (11), Michigan (4), Minnesota (10), Montana (8), New Jersey (8), New York (4), Pennsylvania (20), and Washington (6). Florida, Minnesota, North Dakota and Texas are the new states reporting cases.

For a map of affected states and case counts by state see:

<https://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/2018/o157h7-04-18/map.html>

The good news is that the growing season of the Yuma region is typically done at the end of March, so cases of infection should decrease until completely gone. However, remember that there will be several weeks after the produce is picked before it isn't in a refrigerator or on a shelf somewhere. The edible time period for the Yuma-region romaine lettuce should be done/nearly done. The lag time between illness and reporting to Public Health is 2 to 3 weeks, so there may still be a few weeks of case reports added.

For a summary of information about E. Coli symptoms, HUS, and incubations periods, check the FirstWatch HIP for the 4/15/18 Outbreak Announcement or find more complete info on the website links below.

For more details on E Coli and this outbreak, please see the links to the CDC and FDA:

<https://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/2018/o157h7-04-18/index.html>

<https://www.fda.gov/Food/RecallsOutbreaksEmergencies/Outbreaks/ucm604254.htm>

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