

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Commissioner



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Environmental Health Section

EHS Circular Letter #2018-31

DATE: 11/21/18

TO: Directors of Health
Certified Food Inspectors
Interested Parties

FROM: Tracey Weeks, MS, RS 
Food Protection Program Coordinator

RE: Food Safety Alert: Romaine Lettuce

CDC issued a food safety alert yesterday afternoon regarding all types of romaine lettuce in response to an ongoing investigation of a multistate outbreak of *E. coli* O157 infection. Currently there are 32 cases in the U.S. (including 1 case in Connecticut) and 18 cases in Canada.

CDC is advising that U.S. consumers not eat any romaine lettuce, and retailers and restaurants not serve or sell any, until more is learned about the multistate outbreak. This investigation is ongoing and the advice will be updated as more information is available. **CDC's warning is provided here for your convenience:**

CDC, public health and regulatory officials in several states, [Canada](#), and the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#) are investigating a multistate outbreak of Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 (*E. coli* O157:H7) infections linked to romaine lettuce.

Advice to Consumers, Restaurants, and Retailers

- Consumers who have any type of romaine lettuce in their home should not eat it and should throw it away, even if some of it was eaten and no one has gotten sick.



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- This advice includes all types or uses of romaine lettuce, such as whole heads of romaine, hearts of romaine, and bags and boxes of precut lettuce and salad mixes that contain romaine, including baby romaine, spring mix, and Caesar salad.
- If you do not know if the lettuce is romaine or whether 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. Follow these [five steps](#) to clean your refrigerator.
- Restaurants and retailers should not serve or sell any romaine lettuce, including salads and salad mixes containing romaine.
- [Take action](#) if you have [symptoms of an *E. coli* infection](#):
 - Talk to your healthcare provider.
 - Write down what you ate in the week before you started to get sick.
 - Report your illness to the health department.
 - Assist public health investigators by answering questions about your illness.

Advice to Clinicians

- [Antibiotics are not recommended](#) for patients with *E. coli* O157 infections. Antibiotics are also not recommended for patients in whom *E. coli* O157 infection is suspected, until diagnostic testing rules out this infection.
- Some studies have shown that administering antibiotics to patients with *E. coli* O157 infections might increase their risk of developing hemolytic uremic syndrome (a type of kidney failure), and the benefit of antibiotic treatment has not been clearly demonstrated.

More information can be obtained from FDA and CDC at:

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

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

Local Health Departments

Although this warning has been widely publicized, local health departments may wish to ensure that their regulated establishments are aware by providing this information during routine inspections or other site visits, by mass distribution through email or fax, or other means as resources allow.

Consumers who call reporting illness believed to be related to romaine lettuce should be advised to seek medical care.