

Important Health Notice

Information for Healthcare Professionals

September 16, 2006

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Possible Food Contamination by *E. coli* and *Salmonella* Bacteria

Dear Colleagues:

The following is being provided to update you on two Health Hazard Alerts issued by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency:

1) The public has been advised not to consume various brands of fresh spinach packaged in the United States because the products may contain *E. coli* O157:H7 bacteria.

2) The public has been warned not to consume Wendy's Homestyle Croutons because the product may be contaminated with *Salmonella*.

We are asking health care providers across Ontario to monitor patients for symptoms of *E. coli* and *Salmonella* and to report any findings to local Public Health Units.

***E. coli* O157:H7**

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency warning to the public on spinach consumption was initiated in response to a recall by Natural Selection Foods, LLC, of San Juan Bautista, California.

The company is recalling all of its products that contain spinach in all the brands it packs with "Best if Used by Dates" of August 17, 2006 through October 1, 2006.

These products include spinach and any salad with spinach in a blend, both retail and food service products. Products that do not contain spinach are not part of the recall. These products may have been distributed nationally.

There are usually a handful of *E. coli* O157:H7 cases across the province at any point in time. But the current cases of *E. coli* O157:H7 reported in the province do not match the genetic pattern that has been recently identified in individuals in the United States.

There have been no reported illnesses, in Ontario, associated with the consumption of these products.

Highlights:

- **Wendy's Homestyle Garlic Croutons sold in Ontario may contain *Salmonella***
- **Various brands of spinach packaged in the United States and sold in Ontario may contain *E. coli* O157:H7**
- **Report any cases to *E. coli* or *Salmonella* to your local Public Health Unit**

E. coli O157:H7 bacteria are found naturally in the intestines of cattle, poultry and other animals. Infections can be spread by many food sources. If people become infected with these bacteria, the infection can result in serious illness.

Symptoms can develop within hours and up to 10 days after ingesting the bacteria, characterized by severe abdominal cramping. Some people may also have bloody diarrhea (hemorrhagic colitis).

Under 10% of individuals with *E. coli* infection will develop Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS).

Generally, an *E. coli* O157:H7 infection must run its course. Antibiotics and antimotility medications are not recommended and may increase the risk of complications.

Salmonella

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has warned the public not to consume Wendy's Homestyle Garlic Croutons because the product may be contaminated with *Salmonella*.

This product has been sold at Wendy's restaurants in Ontario. The company has initiated a recall of the affected product. There have been no reported illnesses associated with the consumption of this product.

Salmonella is a naturally-occurring bacteria found in the intestines of animals, particularly poultry, cattle and swine. Infections can be spread by many food sources.

Symptoms of salmonella include fever, headache, diarrhea, stomach cramps, nausea and sometimes vomiting. Symptoms occur 12 to 36 hours after eating contaminated food or water.

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Generally, a salmonella infection must run its course.

For further information

Canadian Food Inspection Agency information about the Health Hazard Alerts:

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/toce.shtml>

MOHLTC Healthcare Providers Hotline:

1-866-212-2272

Sincerely,

(original signed by)

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