
TWO CASES OF E. COLI IN CHATHAM-KENT LINKED TO U.S. OUTBREAK

NEWS

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Dr. David Williams, Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health is issuing a public alert about two *E. coli* O157:H7 cases that are thought to be linked to iceberg lettuce that has been distributed in Ontario.

Test results show that two cases in Chatham-Kent are of the same strain of *E. coli* O157:H7 identified in 38 cases in the United States. All of the cases are thought to be linked to shredded iceberg lettuce distributed by Aunt Mid's Produce Company. This product is distributed in five pound industrial bags to institutions such as hospitals and long-term care homes, as well as restaurants in southwestern Ontario.

Due to the potential risks associated with this product, all public health units have been asked to:

- Contact all hospitals, long-term care homes and other institutions to verify if the product has been used in the last month and to place any remaining product on hold.
- Send any unopened packages to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's Central Public Health Lab for testing.
- Instruct all hospitals and institutions to stop all use of this product until further notice.

In addition, public health units in southwestern Ontario are contacting specific restaurants that may have received the product and asking them to place it on hold.

The lettuce was last distributed in Ontario on September 26, 2008. Since the product has a 12-day shelf-life it could still be in use.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is working with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency on this investigation.

E. coli O157:H7 may cause serious gastroenteritis, most often with symptoms of diarrhea, and often accompanied by other symptoms including vomiting, and dehydration. The main concern with *E. coli* O157:H7 diarrhea is that approximately two-to-seven percent of individuals develop Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS). HUS is a life threatening disease of the kidneys and circulatory system that requires extensive medical treatment. The individuals usually affected are children under five years of age and the elderly.

LEARN MORE

Find out more about [E. coli](#) online.

Read news releases from [Michigan](#) and [Illinois](#).

Contact your [local public health unit](#).

For public inquiries call ServiceOntario, INFOline at 1-866-532-3161 (Toll-free in Ontario only)

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