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Officials recommend discarding all romaine lettuce due to new multistate outbreak of E. coli; no Alaska cases reported

Nov. 20, 2018 ANCHORAGE, AK – The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are investigating a multistate outbreak of E. coli O157:H7 illnesses likely linked to the consumption of romaine lettuce.

CDC is reporting that 32 cases of E. coli O157:H7 infection have been identified in residents of 11 states since early October; 13 people have been hospitalized, and no deaths have been reported. No cases have been detected in Alaska.

Because details about specific romaine lettuce distributors or producers are not yet known, the CDC and FDA recommend that people should not consume any romaine lettuce until further information can be obtained. This includes whole head romaine, precut lettuce, hearts of romaine in bags and mixed salads that contain romaine. Retailers and restaurants should not offer for sale or serve any romaine until more is known about this outbreak.

Symptoms of E. coli O157:H7 infection include stomach cramps, diarrhea (often bloody) and vomiting. Occasionally, more serious complications can occur, including kidney failure and death. Alaskans should talk to a health care provider if they have symptoms of E. coli infection.

For more information:

CDC: https://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/2018/o157h7-11-18/index.html
FDA: https://www.fda.gov/Food/RecallsOutbreaksEmergencies/Outbreaks/ucm626330.htm
**Department of Environmental Conservation** – Food safety and product recall (Lorinda Lhotka, 907-451-2119 lorinda.lhotka@alaska.gov)

**Department of Health and Social Services** – *E. coli*, health concerns (Clinton Bennett, 907-269-4996, clinton.bennett@alaska.gov)

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