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Listeria risk associated with recalled CRF frozen fruits and vegetables *Listeria concern tied to food supplier with wide retail distribution*

Anchorage, AK (May 5, 2016) – The Alaska Division of Public Health is warning consumers not to eat frozen fruits and vegetable products from the CRF Frozen Foods Company because of potential contamination with *Listeria* bacteria. *Listeria* are bacteria that can be found in dust, soil, water, sewage and in the environment. *Listeria* can contaminate frozen food and survive over an extended period of time with long shelf lives of up to a few years.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and state health departments are investigating a multi-state outbreak of *Listeria* infections. Eight cases of listeriosis in 3 states have been identified through whole genome sequencing, a form of “DNA fingerprinting,” as being closely related genetically. This close genetic relationship means that people in this outbreak were more likely to share a common source of infection, such as a contaminated food. *Listeria* isolated from implicated products tested at CRF Frozen Foods, based in Pasco, Wash., have been found to be closely genetically related to the isolates from ill people. While product has been distributed to all 50 states, Alaska has not reported any illnesses due to this outbreak to date.

On April 23, 2016, CRF Frozen Foods recalled 11 frozen vegetable products because they may be contaminated with *Listeria*. On May 2, 2016, CRF Frozen Foods expanded the initial recall to include all frozen organic and traditional fruit and vegetable products manufactured or processed in CRF Frozen Foods' Pasco facility since May 1, 2014. **All affected products have “best by” dates or “sell by” dates between April 26, 2016 and April 26, 2018.** These include approximately 358 consumer products packaged and sold under 42 separate brands. These products have been distributed to some provinces in Canada and to all states in the U.S., including to stores in Alaska. Affected brands include those store brands sold at Trader Joe’s, Walmart, Sam’s Club, Safeway, Costco, and others. The complete list of products can be found on the FDA’s website: <http://www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/ucm498841.htm>.

Listeriosis is a life-threatening invasive infection caused by eating *Listeria* –contaminated food. The disease primarily affects pregnant women and their newborns, older adults, and persons with immune systems weakened by cancer, cancer treatments, or other serious conditions (like diabetes, kidney failure, liver disease, and HIV/AIDS). A person with listeriosis generally has fever and muscle aches and can have a bloodstream infection or meningitis. Although people can sometimes develop listeriosis up to 2 months after eating contaminated food, symptoms usually start within several days, often with diarrhea. Listeriosis is treated with antibiotics. Anyone suspecting listeriosis should contact their healthcare provider.

Symptoms may vary depending on the health status of the person and severity of the illness:

- Higher-risk persons: Symptoms can include fever, muscle aches, headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance, and convulsions.
- Pregnant women: Pregnant women typically experience only fever and other non-specific symptoms. However, infection during pregnancy can lead to miscarriage, stillbirth, premature delivery, or life-threatening infections of the newborn.

- Healthy persons: Healthy persons rarely develop invasive listeriosis but can experience a milder illness with fever and diarrhea.

Due to the products' long shelf lives, consumers should check their freezers for these products and discard them in a way where no one else can eat them or should take the products back to the place of purchase for a refund. For more information about these products, please contact CRF Frozen Foods Consumer Hotline at 844-551-5595, Monday through Friday, 7:00 am to 4:00 pm (Alaska Time). The Division of Public Health will continue to monitor this situation closely with the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Division of Environmental Health.

[Alaska Section of Epidemiology Listeria webpage - http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/listeria.aspx](http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/listeria.aspx)

[Alaska DEC Recall Alerts - http://dec.alaska.gov/eh/fss/recallsalerts.html](http://dec.alaska.gov/eh/fss/recallsalerts.html)

[CDC Listeria Website - http://www.cdc.gov/listeria/](http://www.cdc.gov/listeria/)

[CDC Listeria outbreak information - http://www.cdc.gov/listeria/outbreaks/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/listeria/outbreaks/index.html)

[FDA recall information - http://www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/ucm499406.htm](http://www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/ucm499406.htm)

Hotline number for recall questions – 844-551-5595