



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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LOCAL E.COLI CASE LINKED TO NATIONAL CHEESE ADVISORY ***Costco Consumers Warned to Return or Dispose of Bravo Farms Dutch Style Gouda Cheese***

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency is warning the public not to consume Bravo Farms Dutch Style Gouda cheese which is associated with a nationwide outbreak of *E.coli* 0157:H7 infections.

To date, 25 people in four states have been infected with the disease, including a 6-year-old girl from San Diego County. All were infected after consuming the cheese samples at Costco stores, however the cheese may have been available at farmers markets or online.

“The girl is doing well now and did not need to be hospitalized,” said Dean Sidelinger, M.D., M.S.Ed., County Deputy Public Health Officer. “We urge consumers who have purchased the cheese not to eat it. They can return it to the store where they bought it, or throw it away in a closed plastic bag and place it in a sealed trash can to prevent people or animals from eating it.”

E. coli 0157:H7 is a potentially deadly bacterium that can cause bloody diarrhea and dehydration. The very young, seniors and persons with compromised immune systems are the most susceptible to foodborne illness.

If anyone experienced or has symptoms of the illness, they should contact their physician immediately.

Costco has voluntarily removed the cheese from its stores and has called almost 6,000 customers who purchased the cheese to warn them of the possible contamination. Costco is offering full refunds to people who return the cheese.

HHSA is collaborating with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and Costco in the investigation to determine the source of the *E. coli* 0157:H7. Additionally, the FDA and the state of California have initiated an investigation into Bravo Farms. For more information, please visit the FDA web site at www.fda.gov.

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