



To: Emergency Medical Alert Network (EMAN) Participants

Date: September 15, 2006

Multi-State Outbreak of E.coli 0157:H7 Associated with Pre-Packaged Spinach

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has advised that consumers not eat bagged fresh spinach until the source of a large multi-state outbreak is determined. To date, 49 illnesses, including one death in Wisconsin, have been reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). States reporting related illnesses include Wisconsin (20), Utah (11), Oregon (5), Indiana (4), Michigan (3), Idaho (3), New Mexico (2) and Connecticut (1). The cases have matching PFGE patterns and appear associated with consumption of pre-packaged spinach.

Investigation is ongoing to determine the specific brand(s) of pre-packaged spinach that may have been contaminated, and whether the product was distributed in California or San Diego County.

Local health care providers are encouraged to perform stool testing on all patients with symptoms compatible with E. coli 0157:H7 infection. Common symptoms include abdominal cramping and diarrhea that is frequently bloody. Lack of fever is characteristic. Approximately 8% of patients develop Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS). Please promptly report all confirmed cases to the Community Epidemiology Branch and forward isolates to the San Diego County Public Health Laboratory (619-692-8500).

Update on Shigella Sonnei (Group D) Outbreak Associated with Local Restaurant

Twenty-seven (27) laboratory-confirmed and 38 probable cases of Shigella Sonnei, Group D, have been reported to the Community Epidemiology Branch as having eaten at a single Filibertos restaurant (3446 University Ave, just east of the 805). Symptom onset dates ranged primarily from August 25 – 31, 2006. Secondary cases within households are also being reported. Common symptoms include diarrhea (some bloody), vomiting and fever (102-104 F). Twenty-two (22) cases and contacts are currently undergoing public health clearance due to their occupations in food handling, health care or child care.

The Community Epidemiology Branch would like to thank local health care providers and laboratory workers for promptly reporting diagnosed cases and forwarding specimens to the Public Health Laboratory for confirmation and PFGE typing. We appreciate your continued efforts in this regard. Thank you.

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County of San Diego, Health & Human Services Agency
Community Epidemiology Branch