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Governor

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State Health Commissioner

DATE: June 27, 2011

TO: All Local Health Departments
Attn: Chief Food Inspection Officer

FROM: A. Scott Gilliam, ^{ASG}MBA, CP-FS
Director, Food Protection Program

SUBJECT: FDA News Release on Evergreen Produce brand alfalfa sprouts or spicy sprouts

SUGGESTED ACTION: Information provided in case of consumer inquiry.

FDA PRESS RELEASE

(Logo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20090824/FDALOGO>)

For Immediate Release: June 27, 2011

Media Inquiries: Stephanie Yao, 301-796-0394, stephanie.yao@fda.hhs.gov

Consumer Inquiries: 888-INFO-FDA

FDA: Do not eat Evergreen Produce brand alfalfa sprouts or spicy sprouts

Sprouts may contain Salmonella Enteritidis; pathogen different from the one in European outbreak

Fast Facts

- The FDA is warning consumers not to eat alfalfa sprouts or spicy sprouts from plastic bags labeled "Evergreen Produce" or "Evergreen Produce Inc."
- The sprouts are possibly linked to 20 reported cases, including one hospitalization, of *Salmonella* Enteritidis in Idaho, Montana, New Jersey, North Dakota and Washington State.
- The elderly, infants and those with impaired immune systems are more likely to have a severe illness from *Salmonella* infection.
- Consumers, retailers and others who have alfalfa sprouts or spicy sprouts in plastic bags labeled "Evergreen Produce" or "Evergreen Produce Inc." should discard them in a sealed container so people and animals, including wild animals, cannot eat them.

What is the Problem?

The FDA is advising consumers not to eat Evergreen Produce brand alfalfa sprouts and spicy sprouts. The sprouts are possibly linked to 20 reported cases, including one hospitalization, of *Salmonella* Enteritidis in Idaho, Montana, New Jersey, North Dakota and Washington State. The strain of *S. Enteritidis* is rarely seen at this frequency.

The pathogen associated with this outbreak is different from the pathogen associated with the outbreak in Europe.

What are the Symptoms of Illness/Injury?

Most persons infected with *Salmonella* develop diarrhea, fever and abdominal cramps 12 to 72 hours after infection. The illness usually lasts four to seven days, and most persons recover without treatment. However, some individuals may require hospitalization from severe diarrhea. *Salmonella* infection may spread from the intestines to the blood stream and then to other body sites. It can cause death unless the person is treated promptly with antibiotics. The elderly, infants and those with impaired immune systems are more likely to become severely ill from *Salmonella* infection.

Who is at Risk?

The elderly, infants and those with impaired immune systems are more likely to become severely ill from *Salmonella* infection. The bacterium can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in these vulnerable populations. Most healthy individuals recover from *Salmonella* infections within four to seven days without treatment.

What Do Consumers Need To Do?

Consumers should not eat alfalfa sprouts or spicy sprouts from plastic bags labeled "Evergreen Produce" or "Evergreen Produce Inc." Consumers, retailers and others who have sprouts in plastic bags labeled "Evergreen Produce" or "Evergreen Produce Inc." should throw them away in a sealed container so people and animals, including wild animals, cannot eat them.

Consumers who think they may have become ill from eating possibly contaminated sprouts should consult their health care providers.

Sprouts are a known source of foodborne illness. Since 1996, there have been at least 30 reported outbreaks of foodborne illness associated with different types of raw and lightly cooked sprouts. Most of these outbreaks were caused by *Salmonella* and *E. coli*. The FDA advises that children, the elderly, pregnant women, and persons with weakened immune systems should avoid eating raw sprouts of any kind (including alfalfa, clover, radish and mung bean sprouts). To reduce the chance of foodborne illness, FDA advises consumers to cook sprouts thoroughly and to request raw sprouts not be added to your food.

What Does the Product Look Like?

The possibly contaminated alfalfa sprouts and spicy sprouts are sold in plastic bags labeled "Evergreen Produce" or "Evergreen Produce Inc."

The alfalfa sprouts are packaged in 4-ounce and 16-ounce plastic bags with pre-printed labels. They are also packaged in 1-pound and 5-pound plastic bags with stick-on labels.

The spicy sprouts are packaged in 4-ounce plastic bags with pre-printed labels and 1-pound plastic bags with stick-on labels.

Where is it Distributed?

To date, the FDA is aware of distribution in Idaho, Montana and Washington State. However, consumers and retailers in neighboring states should check the product label to ensure they are not eating or selling Evergreen Produce brand alfalfa sprouts or spicy sprouts.

What is Being Done about the Problem?

FDA is investigating the problem in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and public health agencies in those states where illnesses have occurred. The investigation is

ongoing. The FDA is also working with state authorities to take appropriate action to address any product that may be remaining on the market.

Who Should be Contacted?

Consumers with questions about sprout safety should contact 1-800-SAFEFOOD.

The information in this press release reflects the FDA's best efforts to communicate what it has learned from the manufacturer and the state and local public health agencies involved in the investigation. The agency will update this page as more information becomes available.

For more information:

- [Salmonella \(CDC\)](#)
- [Salmonella \(FoodSafety.gov\)](#)
- [Sprouts: What You Should Know](#)

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