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Multistate Listeriosis Outbreak Update

Ongoing collaborative investigations by local, state, and federal public health and regulatory agencies indicate the likely source of the outbreak is a type of cantaloupe, called Rocky Ford cantaloupes, which are grown in the Rocky Ford region of southeastern Colorado. These cantaloupes were harvested in August and September, distributed widely in the United States, and are currently available in grocery stores. All nine New Mexico cases recalled eating cantaloupe prior to illness. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the firms involved, and public health authorities in states where illnesses have occurred to determine the exact source of contamination. While the FDA has identified a potential source of contamination of the cantaloupe, there have been no recalls issued at this point. New Mexico Environmental Health Bureau inspectors continue to collect cantaloupe samples from various grocery stores and distributors across the state for laboratory analysis.

The New Mexico Department of Health and CDC advise persons at high risk for listeriosis, including older adults, persons with weakened immune systems, and pregnant women, to not eat cantaloupes marketed as coming from the Rocky Ford region of Colorado.

General Melon Safety Advice:

- Consumers and food preparers should wash their hands before and after handling any whole melon, such as cantaloupe, watermelon, or honeydew.
- Wash the melons and dry them with a clean cloth or paper towel before cutting.
- Cut melon should be promptly consumed or refrigerated at or less than 40 degrees F (32-34 degrees F is optimal for storage of cut melon).
- Cut melons left at room temperature for more than 4 hours should be discarded.

More information about this outbreak of Listeriosis and recommendations to reduce the risk of getting Listeriosis from food can be found on CDC's webpage:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nczved/divisions/dfbmd/diseases/listeriosis/091211.html>



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