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### **New Mexico Reports 13 Cases of Listeriosis Confirmed to be Part of the Multistate Outbreak Linked to Cantaloupe**

(Santa Fe) – To date, the New Mexico Department of Health (DOH) has identified 13 patients hospitalized with *Listeria* infection since mid-August, including 5 fatalities. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has confirmed by DNA fingerprinting tests that all 13 New Mexico patients are part of the multi-state Listeriosis outbreak linked to Jensen Farms' Rocky Ford cantaloupes.

New Mexico's fatal cases include: a 93-year-old man from Bernalillo County, a 61-year-old female from Curry County, a 63-year-old man from Bernalillo County, a 77-year-old man from McKinley County and a 96-year-old female from Lea County. The other New Mexico cases have come from Bernalillo, Chaves, Otero, De Baca, and Valencia counties. The cases range in age from the 43 to 96 and include 7 men and 6 women.

DOH is advising that nobody, especially those at high risk for listeriosis (older adults, persons with weakened immune systems, newborns, and pregnant women), eat Rocky Ford cantaloupes from Jensen Farms. Even if some of the cantaloupe has been eaten without becoming ill, dispose of the rest of the cantaloupe immediately. *Listeria* bacteria can grow in the cantaloupe at room and refrigerator temperatures. Cantaloupes that are known to NOT have come from Jensen Farms are safe to eat. If consumers are uncertain about the source of a cantaloupe for purchase, they should ask the grocery store. If you are unsure of a cantaloupe's origins, the safest thing to do is to place it in a closed plastic bag and then in a sealed trash can.

Listeriosis, a serious infection usually caused by eating food contaminated with the bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes*, is an important public health problem in the United States. A person with listeriosis usually has fever and muscle aches, often preceded by diarrhea or other gastrointestinal symptoms. In addition to fever and muscle aches, symptoms can include headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance, and convulsions. Pregnant women with listeriosis typically experience only a mild, flu-like illness. However, infections during pregnancy can lead to miscarriage, stillbirth, premature delivery, or life-threatening infection of the newborn.



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Antibiotics given promptly can potentially cure the illness and prevent infection of a fetus. Even with prompt treatment, some Listeria infections result in death. If you feel sick with symptoms of Listeria and have consumed cantaloupe, please contact your healthcare provider.

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/listeria/index.html>.

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