

Salmonella Health Alert

Michigan Department of Community Health recently confirmed that there are 12 confirmed Salmonella Typhimurium cases from seven jurisdictions in Michigan. Two of these cases are in Wayne County. MDCH and MDA are working closely with local health departments, the CDC and the FDA to determine the source of the outbreak. Information available thus far suggests that it may be linked to eating raw sprouts.

Sprouts are the germinating form of seeds and beans and are frequently eaten raw in sandwiches and salads. Past sprout-related outbreaks of food borne illness have been linked to seeds contaminated by fecal materials in the field, during storage, or as a result of poor hygienic practices in the production of sprouts. In addition, the warm and humid conditions required to grow sprouts are ideal for the rapid growth of bacteria.

In general, the FDA recommends these guidelines for those who choose to continue to eat sprouts.

- Cook all sprouts thoroughly before eating to significantly reduce the risk of illness.
- Sandwiches and salads purchased at restaurants and delicatessens often contain raw sprouts. Consumers who wish to reduce their risk of food borne illness should specifically request that raw sprouts not be added to their food.
- Homegrown sprouts also present a health risk if eaten raw or lightly cooked. Many outbreaks have been attributed to contaminated seed. If pathogenic bacteria are present in or on seed, they can grow to high levels during sprouting even under clean conditions.

Salmonellosis is a disease caused by the bacterium is an infection with bacteria called Salmonella. Most persons infected with Salmonella develop diarrhea, fever, and abdominal cramps 12 to 72 hours after infection. The illness usually lasts 4 to 7 days, and most people recover without treatment. The elderly, infants, and those with weak immune systems are more likely to have a severe illness. Anyone who has recently eaten raw alfalfa sprouts and is experiencing symptoms should contact their healthcare provider and their local health department.

For further information on Salmonella please go to:

http://www.cdc.gov/nczved/dfbmd/disease_listing/salmonellosis_gi.html

If you have any questions please call WCDPH Disease Control Section at 734-727-7078