



# Yakima Health District

## News Release

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### **Alert: FDA Investigating Multistate Outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7 Infections Likely Linked to Romaine Lettuce**

#### **Food Safety Alert: The Centers for Disease Control advises concerning an *E. coli***

**Outbreak:** Do not eat, serve, or sell ANY romaine lettuce while investigation continues. This includes whole heads of lettuce, hearts of romaine, chopped romaine, organic romaine and salad mixes with romaine. Romaine is linked to 32 *E. coli* O157 infections in [11 states](#).

While there is no genetic link between the current outbreak and the *E. coli* O157:H7 outbreak linked to romaine that occurred in the [Spring of 2018](#), the FDA is conducting a traceback investigation to determine the source of the romaine lettuce eaten by people who became sick. Additionally, FDA and states are conducting laboratory analysis of romaine lettuce samples potentially linked to the current outbreak.

**There currently are no known cases in Washington State linked to this outbreak.** People should not eat romaine lettuce until more is known about the source of the contaminated lettuce and the status of the outbreak.

The symptoms of Shiga toxin-producing (STEC) *E. coli* infections vary for each person but often include severe stomach cramps and bloody diarrhea. If there is fever, it is usually less than 101 degrees Fahrenheit. Most people get better within 5-7 days, but others can have very severe or life-threatening infections. People need to **take action** if they have symptoms of an *E. coli* infection by talking with their healthcare providers and potentially seeking care.

People usually get sick from Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) 2–8 days (average of 3–4 days) after swallowing the germ. Illnesses that occurred after October 30, 2018, might not yet be reported due to the [time it takes between when a person becomes ill with \*E. coli\* infection and when the illness is reported](#), which can take an average of two to three weeks.

Thirteen people were hospitalized, including one person who developed hemolytic uremic syndrome, a type of kidney failure. No deaths have been reported.



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## **Recommendations:**

- Take action if you have symptoms of an E. coli infection by talking with your healthcare provider and potentially seeking care.
- Consumers who have any type of romaine lettuce in their home should not eat it and should throw it away, even if some of it was eaten and no one has gotten sick. This advice includes all romaine lettuce, such as whole heads of romaine, hearts of romaine, and bags and boxes of precut lettuce and salad mixes that contain romaine, including baby romaine, spring mix, and Caesar salad.
- If you do not know if the lettuce is romaine or whether a salad mix contains romaine, do not eat it and throw it away.
- Wash the inside walls and shelves of the refrigerator, cutting boards and countertops; then sanitize them with a food-safe sanitizer such as a solution of one tablespoon of chlorine bleach to one gallon of water; dry with a clean cloth or paper towel that has not been previously used.
- Restaurants and retailers should not serve or sell any romaine lettuce, including salads and salad mixes containing romaine.

## **More Information,**

[Center for Disease Control](#)

[Food and Drug Administration](#)

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