



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

Oct. 8, 2003

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INVESTIGATION INTO E. COLI SOURCE CONTINUES

School districts, restaurants notified of voluntary recall of commercial bagged lettuce mix

San Diego County and state officials continue to investigate a surge in E. coli 0157 cases, as well as the possible source of the infection, which has resulted in a voluntary recall of lettuce products packaged by a commercial company. Sixteen cases of potential E. coli have been reported in San Diego, with four others reported in Orange County.

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency, working with the San Diego County Department of Environmental Health and officials from the California Department of Health Services, has determined a possible source of the infection is a bagged lettuce mix.

At this time, the County has determined that the product was used by two school districts in San Diego County – San Marcos Unified School District, and Alpine Union School District – as well as Pat and Oscar's restaurants. Both school districts and the restaurant's corporate offices have been informed of the recall and are no longer using the products.

Many victims reported eating salad at Carlsbad (Palomar Airport Road), Mission Valley and El Cajon Pat and Oscar's and two in Orange County. Pat and Oscar's voluntarily removed salads containing the lettuce mix from its menu.

E.coli 0157 infection is caused by a strain of the E.coli bacteria, which can cause abdominal cramping, bloody diarrhea, vomiting and nausea. Anyone experiencing these symptoms is advised to call their physician.

The public is urged to wash produce carefully, including bagged lettuce.

HHSA has notified physicians throughout the county about the cases. Thirty-two cases of E.coli 0157 were reported to HHSA in 2000, 23 cases in 2001 and 21 cases in 2002. For more information on E.coli, please visit the Centers for Disease Control Web site, www.cdc.gov.

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