



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION
Oct. 23, 2003

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ADDITIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS MAY HAVE RECEIVED SUSPECT LETTUCE

School Districts Notified of Possible Contamination; Number of E. coli Cases Remains at 40

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) reports that three students in three different school districts have now been confirmed to be infected by the same E. coli 0157 bacteria detected in the infected patrons of Pat and Oscar's restaurants. There is no reason to believe that any suspect salad mix has been in the schools or restaurants since it was recalled during the week of Oct. 6.

The three students are from the Alpine, Mountain Empire and Valley Center school districts. San Marcos Unified School District also received lettuce from the same distributor, but no students there reported illness.

The California Department of Health Services, working closely with the San Diego County Department of Environmental Health (DEH), determined that the Mountain Empire, Alpine and Valley Center school districts most likely received the same salad mix delivered to Pat and Oscar's restaurants. A bagged commercial lettuce mix is still considered a likely suspect of contamination, and laboratory studies continue. The lettuce mix has been recalled.

A total of 13 school districts in San Diego County received salad products from the same distributor. All were notified that based on delivery records, they may have received suspect lettuce. The school districts were asked, as a precaution, to voluntarily pull their salad mix products.

DEH is sending letters to school districts with more details on the recalled mix, focusing on food preparation tips.

Forty cases of E. coli 0157 have been reported to HHSA, with the people ranging in age from 17 months to 84 years.

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