

Multistate Outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7 Infections Linked to Romaine Lettuce

Posted June 1, 2018 10:45 AM EST

What's New?

- Twenty-five more ill people from 13 states were added to this investigation since the last update on May 16, 2018.
- Three more states have reported ill people: Arkansas, North Carolina, and Oklahoma.
- Four more deaths were reported from Arkansas (1), Minnesota (2), and New York (1).
- It takes two to three weeks between when a person becomes ill with *E. coli* and when the illness is reported to CDC. Most of the people who recently became ill ate romaine lettuce when lettuce from the Yuma growing region was likely still available in stores, restaurants, or in peoples' homes. Some people who became sick did not report eating romaine lettuce, but had close contact with someone else who got sick from eating romaine lettuce.

Highlights

- Information collected to date indicates that romaine lettuce from the Yuma growing region could have been contaminated with Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* O157:H7 and made people sick.
- According to the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#), the last shipments of romaine lettuce from the Yuma growing region were harvested on April 16, 2018, and the harvest season is over. It is unlikely that any romaine lettuce from the Yuma growing region is still available in people's homes, stores, or restaurants due to its 21-day shelf life.
- **[Advice to Consumers:](#)**
 - If you have symptoms of an *E. coli* infection, [take action](#) and talk to your healthcare provider.
 - [Follow these steps](#) to help keep you healthy and your fruits and vegetables safer to eat.
 - Read more on [general ways to prevent *E. coli* infection](#). An important step is to wash hands after using the restroom or changing diapers, before and after preparing or eating food, and after contact with animals.
- **[Advice to Clinicians:](#)**

- Antibiotics are not recommended for patients with suspected *E. coli* O157 infections until diagnostic testing can be performed and *E. coli* O157 infection is ruled out.
- CDC, public health and regulatory officials in several states, and the FDA are investigating a multistate outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7 infections.
- 197 people infected with the outbreak strain of *E. coli* O157:H7 have been reported from 35 states.
 - 89 people have been hospitalized, including 26 people who have developed a type of kidney failure called hemolytic uremic syndrome.
 - 5 deaths have been reported from Arkansas (1), California (1), Minnesota (2), and New York (1).
- The [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) has identified people in several Canadian provinces infected with the same DNA fingerprint of *E. coli* O157:H7.
- This investigation is ongoing, and CDC will provide updates when more information is available.

Case Count Update

Since the last update on May 16, 2018, 25 more ill people were added to this outbreak.

As of May 30, 2018, 197 people infected with the outbreak strain of *E. coli* O157:H7 have been reported from 35 states. A list of the states and the number of cases in each can be found on the [Case Count Map page](#). Illnesses started on dates ranging from [March 13, 2018 to May 12, 2018](#). Ill people range in age from 1 to 88 years, with a median age of 29. Sixty-eight percent of ill people are female. Of 187 people with information available, 89 (48%) have been hospitalized, including 26 people who developed hemolytic uremic syndrome, a type of kidney failure. Five deaths have been reported from Arkansas (1), California (1), Minnesota (2), and New York (1).

Illnesses that occurred after May 6, 2018 might not yet be reported due to the time it takes between when a person becomes ill with *E. coli* and when the illness is reported. This takes an average of [two to three weeks](#).

Investigation Update

State and local health officials continue to interview ill people to ask about the foods they ate and other exposures they had before they became ill. Of the 158 people interviewed, 140 (89%) reported eating romaine lettuce in the week before their illness started. This percentage is significantly higher

than results from a [survey\[PDF – 29 pages\]](#) of healthy people in which 46% reported eating romaine lettuce in the week before they were interviewed.

Most of the people who recently became ill ate romaine lettuce when lettuce from the Yuma growing region was likely still available in stores, restaurants, or in peoples' homes. Some people who became sick did not report eating romaine lettuce, but had close contact with someone else who got sick from eating romaine lettuce.

This investigation is ongoing, and CDC will provide more information as it becomes available.