



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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GOVERNOR

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ADVISES PUBLIC TO WASH PRODUCE THOROUGHLY

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health is investigating a few recent cases of a rare form of meningitis caused by a parasite found in snails and slugs in Hawaii. Eating uncooked garden-variety snails and slugs can cause a rare infection, which can lead to serious illness.

The Department of Health is warning the public to thoroughly wash produce before consumption. Among the many health dangers associated with eating unwashed vegetables are exposure to chemicals from pesticides, bacteria from farm animals and implements or parasites such as *angiostrongylus* from slugs and snails.

“*Angiostrongylus* is a parasite - seen in local slugs and snails for decades - that can cause serious illness if ingested,” said Health Director Chiyome Fukino, M.D. “By washing vegetables thoroughly you can prevent potential unwanted pests in your salad and protect your family.”

Health officials also warn that any recipe calling for mollusks such as snails or slugs should be cooked thoroughly. Sufficient heat will kill the parasites. Consumption of raw mollusks (snails or slugs) should be avoided.

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