



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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DOH ADVISES CONSUMERS NOT TO EAT FRESH, BAGGED SPINACH

HONOLULU — While there are no confirmed cases of related illness in Hawaii, the Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) is echoing the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's warning to avoid eating raw, bagged spinach in light of recent reports of a multi-state outbreak of *E. coli* 0157:H7.

The DOH recommends that bagged fresh spinach not be consumed in any form, even if it is cooked. DOH health inspectors are also advising all restaurants not to serve any bagged spinach until further notice. The warning applies to bagged spinach only and not to frozen block spinach or spinach from local markets.

The DOH recommends that consumers take the following precautions:

- Don't eat raw bagged spinach until FDA lifts its warning
- Always wash raw fruits or vegetable under running water before eating
- Always wash your hand with soap and warm water before and after preparing foods, after using the toilet, handling animals or changing diapers.
- Wash cutting boards after using them for meat or poultry preparation and before using the same surface to cut fruits and vegetables, or use separate cutting boards for meats and other foods.

Because contaminated meat is the greatest source of *E. coli* 0157:H7, never eat rare or undercooked ground beef, and cook it to 160 degrees F or higher.

(more)

DOH advises consumers not to eat fresh bagged spinach

Anyone who experiences symptoms of illness after eating bagged spinach should contact their health care provider. *E. coli* 0157:H7 is a food-borne bacterial that causes severe diarrhea, often with bloody stools, and abdominal cramps. Fever is absent or mild. Some infected people experience only mild diarrhea and no other symptoms. People who get sick from *E. coli* 0157:H7 usually do so within three to four days after eating contaminated foods.

The federal Food and Drug Administration is working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to trace the spinach back to its grower and vendors. More than 50 cases of illness have been reported to the CDC.

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