



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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WARNING ON CARROT JUICE DUE TO BOTULISM CONCERNS

HONOLULU - The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) is warning consumers not to drink Bolthouse Farms Carrot Juice, 450 ml and 1 liter plastic bottles, with "BEST IF USED BY" dates of NOV 11 2006 OR EARLIER. While there have been no confirmed cases of botulism in Hawaii, DOH is reinforcing the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) warning to discard this product. FDA is also advising consumers to keep carrot juice-including pasteurized carrot juice refrigerated.

The CDC has confirmed 4 cases of botulism poisoning in the U.S. The most recent case involves an adult female in Florida who is currently suffering from paralysis. To date, one link between the illness and the ill consumers appears to be that the juice they drank was not properly refrigerated once it was in the home, which allowed the Clostridium botulinum spores to grow and produce toxin. FDA is investigating other possible links.

The DOH had requested vendors in Hawaii carrying the product to voluntarily remove it from sale in September when isolated reports of botulism cases were first confirmed in Florida.

Cases of botulism from processed food are extremely rare in the U.S. Clostridium botulinum is a bacterium commonly found in soil. Under certain conditions these bacteria can produce a toxin that if ingested can result in botulism, a disease that may cause paralysis or death.

Symptoms of botulism can include: double-vision, droopy eyelids, altered voice, trouble with speaking or swallowing, and paralysis on both sides of the body that progresses from the neck down, possibly followed by difficulty in breathing. Anyone experiencing these symptoms should seek immediate medical attention.

Adequate refrigeration is one of the keys to food safety and is essential to preventing the growth of harmful bacteria. Refrigerator temperatures should be below 40°F and freezer temperatures no higher than 0°F. Consumers should check the temperatures occasionally with an appliance thermometer. Consumers should look for the words "Keep Refrigerated" on juice labels so they know which products must be kept refrigerated. FDA is looking into whether industry's current juice labels provide clear refrigeration instructions.

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The DOH Food and Drug Branch ensures that food, drugs, cosmetics, medical devices and related consumer products in Hawaii are safe, effective (in the case of drugs and medical devices), and properly labeled. In addition to compliance inspections, routine sampling of various food products, complaint and foodborne illness investigations, the branch also provides education and consultation for food handlers.

More information is available on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration web page at www.fda.gov.

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