

Health Advisory

Cover Sheet

DATE: May 23, 2014

SUBJECT: Multistate Outbreak of Shiga toxin-producing
Escherichia coli O121 Infections Linked to Raw
Clover Sprouts

For LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT reference only
DPHHS Subject Matter Resource for more information regarding this HAN, contact:
**DPHHS CDCP
Epidemiology Section
1-406-444-0273**

INSTRUCTIONS:

DISTRIBUTE to your local HAN contacts. This HAN is intended for general sharing of information. **Remove this cover sheet before redistributing and replace it with your own.**

**DPHHS Health Alert Hotline:
1-800-701-5769**

**DPHHS HAN Website:
www.han.mt.gov**

**REMOVE THIS COVER SHEET BEFORE REDISTRIBUTING
AND REPLACE IT WITH YOUR OWN**

Please ensure that DPHHS is included on your HAN distribution list.

Categories of Health Alert Messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Information Service: passes along low level priority messages that do not fit other HAN categories and are for informational purposes only.

Please call DPHHS to update contact information at 444-0919 or 444-6906

Information Sheet

Date: May 23, 2014

Subject: Multistate Outbreak of Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* O121 Infections Linked to Raw Clover Sprouts

Background: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is reporting a multi-state outbreak of Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* O121 (STEC O121). As of May 21, 2014, seven confirmed and three probable cases of STEC O121 infection have been reported in Idaho and Washington. An initial investigation in Washington and Idaho has determined that the outbreak may be related to people eating raw clover sprouts from Evergreen Fresh Sprouts, LLC of Idaho. Product from the supplier was shipped to locations throughout Montana.

- The number of ill persons identified in each state is as follows: Idaho (3) and Washington (7)
- Fifty percent of ill persons have been hospitalized. No ill persons have developed hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), and no deaths have been reported
- No confirmed cases have been identified in Montana at this time

Information: The sprouts suspected of contamination were distributed to numerous restaurants and grocery stores in Montana. State and local public health authorities notified recipients and believe the sprouts are no longer available for the public to purchase. State and local health authorities will provide updated information as it develops at: www.dphhs.mt.gov.

Recommendations:

Health Care Providers and Laboratories: Please Report all suspected cases to local health jurisdictions immediately and coordinate actions as requested by your local health jurisdiction.

Clinical Features/Signs & Symptoms:

- People usually get sick from STEC 2-8 days (average of 3-4 days) after swallowing the organism (germ).
- Most people infected with STEC develop diarrhea (often bloody) and abdominal cramps.
- Most people recover within a week.
- Some illnesses last longer and can be more severe, resulting in a type of kidney failure called hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS).
 - HUS can occur in people of any age, but is most common in young children under 5 years, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems.

- Symptoms of HUS can include fever, abdominal pain, pale skin tone, fatigue and irritability, small, unexplained bruises or bleeding from the nose and mouth, and decreased urination.
- People who experience these symptoms should seek emergency medical care immediately.
- STEC infection is usually diagnosed by testing of a stool sample.
- Testing specific for STEC is highly recommended for patients with the above symptoms

Special Instructions for Laboratories

- Clinical laboratories are asked to report suspected and confirmed cases to local public health authorities and send all shiga toxin producing *Escherichia coli* isolates to the Montana State Public Health Laboratory (MTPHL) as soon as possible for additional characterization.
- Specimens or enrichment broths in which Shiga toxin or STEC are detected, but from which STEC isolates are not recovered, should be forwarded as soon as possible to MTPHL so that they can be further tested. This would include specimens from patients with HUS who have not had a positive STEC or toxigenic *E. coli* isolate recovered.
- With prior arrangements, fee-waived testing can be performed at the Montana Public Health Laboratory (MTPHL) when requested by a licensed healthcare practitioner who has a patient meeting the clinical and epidemiological criteria. Your local public health department and DPHHS will assist with arranging testing for individuals meeting the above criteria.

Please contact MTPHL at 800-821-7284 for additional information regarding testing and prior to any contact with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Local Public Health Agencies: Local health jurisdictions (LHJs) are requested to disseminate this information to healthcare providers most likely to encounter acute cases of disease such as emergency rooms and urgent care centers to ensure their awareness of the situation and actions to take, if they encounter suspected cases.

Suspected or confirmed cases should be interviewed to:

- Determine if sprouts were consumed 2-8 days prior to onset of illness.
- Determine if others in household or relevant setting are ill.
- Ensure product is no longer available for consumption.
- Restrict, as necessary, from work in sensitive occupations until symptoms resolve.

Testing at MTPHL may be offered to providers and for patients that may have inability to pay. Your local public health department and DPHHS will assist with arranging testing for individuals meeting the above criteria.

Public health nurses and registered sanitarians are encouraged to monitor email for updates from DPHHS as new information becomes available.

For additional information, please contact your local public health agency or visit the DPHHS web-site at: www.dphhs.mt.gov