



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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What You Should Know after Two Produce Recalls

GRAND RAPIDS – The Kent County Health Department wants consumers to know the symptoms of illness from the bacteria *Listeria monocytogenes*. This comes after a second recall in West Michigan from potentially contaminated produce. This week, Buurma Farms, Inc., recalled fresh cilantro, sold in Meijer Stores in recent weeks. Earlier this month, Heeren Brothers Produce recalled cantaloupe sold in small, independent stores, due to possible listeria contamination.

The health department recommends those who may have eaten either of the recalled items to contact a health care provider if they notice symptoms of illness in the coming weeks, especially those who may already be at high risk for illness. The Listeria bacteria can cause the infection Listeriosis in some people, and can be fatal in high-risk populations. Listeriosis infection has an incubation period that ranges from three days to ten weeks.

Symptoms of Listeriosis include fever and muscle aches, sometimes preceded by diarrhea, stomach cramping or vomiting. If you start to notice these symptoms and believe you may have eaten any potentially contaminated produce in these recalls, contact your health care provider immediately. In pregnant women, Listeriosis can cause a variety of health complications for the fetus, including miscarriage and stillbirth. Other symptoms include headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance, and convulsions. Even though Listeriosis is treatable with antibiotics, it has a high death rate among the food-borne infections.

“There have been no complaints of illness received from either the cantaloupe or cilantro recalls this summer,” said Adam London, Administrative Health Officer of Kent County. “Still, it is a concern, as the incubation period is so lengthy. We are especially concerned about people who are vulnerable to illness: newborns, older adults, those with compromised immune systems, and women who are pregnant.”

If you believe you have the produce that has been recalled, you should throw it away immediately. Here is a link to the FDA recall which includes a list of stores (mainly Meijer Stores) that have recalled cilantro: <http://www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/ucm365422.htm>.

More information on Listeriosis can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/listeria/>.

KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.