

Food Safety Alert

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has linked a multistate outbreak of listeriosis to whole cantaloupes from Jensen Farms, Colorado. Listeriosis is a serious infection caused by eating food contaminated with the bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes*. Persons at high risk for listeriosis include older adults, persons with weakened immune systems, pregnant women, and newborns. Rarely, persons without these risk factors can also be affected.

As of 5:00 pm EDT on September 20, 2011, a total of 55 persons infected with listeriosis associated with this outbreak have been reported from 14 states. All illnesses started on or after August 4, 2011. Ill persons have been identified in Virginia and Maryland. On September 14, 2011, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a [press release](#) to announce that Jensen Farms issued a voluntary recall of its Rocky Ford-brand cantaloupes after being linked to a multi-state outbreak of listeriosis.

Symptoms of listeriosis may vary from mild to severe and may include fever and muscle aches, diarrhea and other gastrointestinal symptoms. Listeriosis is treated with antibiotics, but can be particularly dangerous for persons at high risk for infection. If you suspect that you may have eaten contaminated cantaloupe you should consult with your doctor immediately. It is possible to develop listeriosis up to two months after eating contaminated food.

Advice to Consumers

Contaminated cantaloupes may still be in grocery stores and in consumers' homes. **The Alexandria Health Department, Environmental Health Division has contacted all produce retailers in the City to follow-up with the recall of whole cantaloupes from Jensen Farms, Colorado.**

- CDC recommends that persons at high risk for listeriosis do not eat Rocky Ford cantaloupes from Jensen Farms. Even if some of the cantaloupe has been eaten without anyone becoming ill, the rest of the cantaloupe should be disposed of immediately. *Listeria* bacteria can grow in the cantaloupe at room and refrigerator temperatures.
- Other persons who want to reduce their risk of listeriosis should not eat Rocky Ford cantaloupes from Jensen Farms.
- The [recalled cantaloupes](#) may have a sticker that looks like the image to the right. Not all of the recalled cantaloupes are labeled with a sticker. Consumers should consult the retailer if they have questions about the origin of a cantaloupe.
- Rocky Ford cantaloupes from Jensen Farms should be disposed of in a closed plastic bag and placed in a sealed trash can to prevent people or animals from eating them.



For additional information about the outbreak:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nczved/divisions/dfbmd/diseases/listeriosis/outbreak.html>

<http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm272527.htm>