

NEWS

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Department of Public Health and Human Services www.dphhs.mt.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chicken salad pulled from Montana Costco shelves for E.coli

The Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS), along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other western states, are issuing a notice to Costco customers who have purchased chicken salad between October 18, 2015 and November 23, 2015. Customers who have purchased chicken salad from Costco stores in Montana should not consume this product, due to a risk of illness.

Since late October, six individuals in Gallatin, Lewis and Clark and Yellowstone counties have become ill from *E.coli* 0157: H7 bacteria. Two of the cases were hospitalized. The six Montana cases are part of a larger outbreak involving multiple states. The exact origin of the outbreak is unknown at this time. Other states with confirmed *E. coli* cases linked to Costco chicken salad include Colorado, Utah, and Washington.

However, illness investigations have identified Costco chicken salad as a risk factor. Costco has already voluntarily removed the chicken salad (item #37719) from their shelves and no other products are a concern at this time. Local health authorities in Montana are contacting Costco stores in their areas to verify the product has been removed from shelves, and are no longer available for purchase.

According to Dana Fejes of the DPHHS Communicable Disease Epidemiology Section, the state is issuing this urgent message to ensure the product is not consumed. "If customers have consumed this product, and they have become ill, we encourage them to consult with their healthcare provider," she said.

Fejes also indicated that Costco has been very helpful with our investigation and taken steps to protect the public by removing the product. "Our concern is that chicken salad already purchased may still be in someone's refrigerator or freezer and that product should not be consumed," she added.

People who become ill from *E. coli* 0157:H7 usually get sick within two to eight days after ingesting the bacteria. Symptoms from illness may include diarrhea, bloody diarrhea, and

abdominal cramps. Most people recover within a week, but sometimes the illness develops into a more severe form that will likely require hospitalization.

Customers who still have Costco chicken salad in their possession, and the container has a packaging date or sell-by date on the label dated between October 18, 2015 and November 23, 2015, are encouraged to dispose of any remaining product. Additional information can be obtained at www.fcsmt.gov.