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## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Health district advises the public regarding an E. coli outbreak associated with bagged spinach**

LAS VEGAS – September 15, 2006 – The Southern Nevada Health District is advising the public not to eat bagged fresh spinach at this time due to an outbreak of E. coli O157:H7 that may be associated with the consumption of produce.

The health district Office of Epidemiology typically reports 10 to 20 cases of E. coli each year. Recent suspected cases reported to the health district are being investigated to determine if they are confirmed cases of E. coli infection and if they are linked to this outbreak.

“The health district has received a number of calls from people who are concerned because they recently ate bagged fresh spinach,” said Dr. Lawrence Sands, community health services director for the health district.

“We are advising people who are currently experiencing symptoms and have recently eaten fresh spinach products to contact their health care provider.”

Health care providers are required to report suspect cases of E. coli to the health district. Some people exposed to E. coli may develop mild diarrhea or have no symptoms at all. Most people with identified cases of the illness will develop severe diarrhea and abdominal cramps. Symptoms normally appear within three days of exposure, with a range of one to nine days.

In some people, particularly children under 5 years of age, the infection can cause a complication called hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). HUS is a serious disease in which red blood cells are destroyed and the kidneys fail. Fortunately, most people with HUS recover completely, but it can be fatal in 3-5 percent of cases.

E. coli infection is acquired by eating food containing the bacteria and person-to-person transmission can occur if infected persons do not wash their hand after using the toilet, or when changing diapers of infected babies.

(more)

This bacteria normally lives in the intestines of human and animals. Although most strains of these bacteria are harmless, E. coli O157:H7 is known to produce a toxin that can cause serious illness.

For more information on E. coli and tips for preventing the illness, access the health district website at [www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.com](http://www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.com).

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