

## News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Cantaloupe associated with cases of *salmonellosis* in Clark County**

(May 2, 2002) – The Clark County Health District is currently investigating 3 cases of salmonella infection potentially linked to consuming cantaloupe. Last year in Clark County there were five cases of salmonellosis associated with cantaloupes.

Symptoms of infection include fever, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. Salmonellosis can cause serious infections in children, the elderly and those with compromised immune systems.

The FDA recommends taking the following steps with cantaloupe and other produce to reduce the risk of foodborne illness:

- Purchase fruits and vegetables that are not bruised or damaged. If buying fresh cut produce, such as cantaloupe or watermelon, be sure it is refrigerated or surrounded by ice.
- After purchase, put product that needs refrigeration away promptly. (Fresh whole produce such as bananas and potatoes do not need refrigeration.) Fresh fruits and vegetables should be refrigerated within two hours of peeling or cutting. Leftover cut produce should be discarded if left at room temperature for more than two hours.
- Wash hands often. Hands should be washed with hot soapy water before and after handling fresh produce, or raw meat, poultry, or seafood, as well as after changing diapers, or handling pets.
- Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables with cool tap water immediately before eating or slicing. Don't use soaps or detergents. Scrub firm produce, such as cantaloupes, watermelons and cucumbers with a clean produce brush. Cut away any bruised or damaged areas before eating.
- Wash surfaces often. Cutting boards, dishes, utensils such as knives, and counter tops should be washed with hot soapy water and sanitized before and after coming in

(more)

- contact with fresh produce, or raw meat, poultry, or seafood. Sanitize after use with a solution of 1 teaspoon of chlorine bleach in one quart of water.
- Don't cross contaminate. Use clean cutting boards and utensils when handling fresh produce. If possible, use one clean cutting board for fresh produce and a separate one for raw meat, poultry and seafood. During food preparation, wash cutting boards, utensils or dishes that have come into contact with raw products.
  - Use a cooler with ice or use ice gel packs when transporting or storing perishable food outdoors, including cut fresh fruits and vegetables.

For more information contact the Clark County Health District at 385-1291.

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