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Public Health Advisory

Potential E.coli contamination in romaine lettuce

November 23, 2018
Nunavut-wide **80 sec**

The Department of Health is advising Nunavummiut that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency is investigating an ongoing risk of E. coli infections in Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick associated with the consumption of romaine lettuce from an unknown manufacturer.

Pregnant women, Elders and people with weakened immune systems are most at risk and as a precaution, should consume alternate types of lettuce.

Unwashed lettuce, including whole heads of lettuce sold in sealed bags, should be handled and washed using these steps:

- Discard outer leaves of fresh lettuce.
- Wash unpackaged lettuce under fresh, cool running water. There is no need to use anything other than water, as washing lettuce gently with water is as effective as using produce cleansers.
- Keep rinsing until all of the dirt is washed away.
- Do not soak lettuce in a sink full of water. It can become contaminated by bacteria in the sink.
- Store lettuce in the refrigerator for up to seven days. Discard when leaves become wilted or brown.
- Use warm water and soap to thoroughly wash all utensils, countertops, cutting boards and storage containers before and after handling lettuce to avoid cross-contamination.

Ready-to-eat lettuce products sold in sealed packages and labelled as washed, pre-washed or triple washed do not need to be washed again. These products should also be refrigerated and used before the expiration date.

For more information, contact the Canadian Food Inspection Agency at 1-866-225-0709 or visit https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/public-health-notices/2018/outbreak-ecoli-infections-linked-romaine-lettuce.html.

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