

FDA officials also warned that *E. coli* (*Escherichia coli*) could be spread among people who did not maintain good hygiene. *E. coli* is found in the stools of people who are infected. This is especially a problem for people who take care of children who are not toilet trained. The FDA reminded people to wash their hands well after using the bathroom and after taking care of small children.

## **FDA Warning on Serious Foodborne *E.coli* O157:H7 Outbreak**

### **One Death and Multiple Hospitalizations in Several States**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is issuing an alert to consumers about an outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7 in multiple states that may be associated with the consumption of produce. To date, preliminary epidemiological evidence suggests that bagged fresh spinach may be a possible cause of this outbreak.

Based on the current information, FDA advises that consumers not eat bagged fresh spinach at this time. Individuals who believe they may have experienced symptoms of illness after consuming bagged spinach are urged to contact their healthcare provider.

"Given the severity of this illness and the seriousness of the outbreak, FDA believes that a warning to consumers is needed. We are working closely with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state and local agencies to determine the cause and scope of the problem," said Dr. Robert Brackett, Director of FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN).

*E. coli* O157:H7 causes diarrhea, often with bloody stools. Although most healthy adults can recover completely within a week, some people can develop a form of kidney failure called Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS). HUS is most likely to occur in young children and the elderly. The condition can lead to serious kidney damage and even death. To date, 50 cases of illness have been reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, including eight cases of HUS and one death.

At this time, the investigation is ongoing and states that have reported illnesses to date include: Connecticut, Idaho, Indiana, Michigan, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, and Wisconsin.

FDA will keep consumers informed of the investigation as more information becomes available.