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E. coli outbreak linked to spinach

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The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, along with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and state and local partners, is investigating a multistate outbreak of *E.coli* O157:H7 infections associated with spinach consumption.

As of Nov. 15, 10 people infected with the outbreak strain have been reported from seven states: Iowa, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio and South Dakota. Illnesses started on dates ranging from Oct. 15 to Oct. 27. Five people in this outbreak reported eating spinach in the week before becoming sick and one person reported eating Josie's Organics brand.

"The FDA, along with the CDC and our state and local partners, is working to investigate a multistate outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7 associated with spinach consumption," said Frank Yiannas, FDA deputy commissioner for food policy and response. "Thus far, the FDA has traced supply chains for this product back to a small number of farms in two different geographic regions and is deploying investigators along the supply chains of interest."

As WGS analysis of the sample is under way, the FDA is tracing back the supply of the baby spinach in the positive product sample. Thus far, the FDA has traced supply chains for this product back to a small number of farms in two different geographic regions and is deploying investigators along the supply chains of interest.

"We are issuing this update early in our investigation as part of our continued commitment to transparency and early communication," said Yiannas. "As we continue working with our partners to determine if additional products could be affected, we're committed to providing updates as we learn more during our continuing traceback investigation, especially if there are any updates to this critical public health advice."

On Nov. 15, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture reported that as part of this outbreak investigation, a sample of Josie's Organics Baby Spinach was collected from the home of an ill person and the sample tested positive for *E. coli* O157:H7. This sample had a "Best If Used By" date of Oct. 23 and is undergoing Whole Genome Sequencing analysis to determine if the strain present in the product sample matches the outbreak strain.

Consumers, restaurants and retailers, should not eat, sell or serve Josie's Organics Baby Spinach with a "Best If Used By" date of Oct. 23. Although this product is past expiration and should no longer be available for purchase, consumers should check their homes for product and discard it. If consumers froze fresh Josie's Organics Baby Spinach, they should discard it.

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