

April 14, 2005
2005/nr-034

FOURTH CASE OF E.COLI LINKED TO UNPASTEURIZED MILK

Chief Medical Officer of Health Repeats Warning About Drinking Unpasteurized Milk

TORONTO – Dr. Sheela Basrur, Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health, today reported a fourth case of E. coli O157 in the province that may be linked to the consumption of unpasteurized milk, with a fifth case under investigation. Three cases were reported in Barrie earlier this week.

The fourth case involves a seven-year-old child from Toronto. The child was treated in hospital and is now recovering at home. Toronto Public Health is also investigating the sibling of the seven year-old for possible E. coli infection.

All individuals under investigation drank unpasteurized milk distributed in Barrie. It is illegal to sell, offer to sell, deliver or distribute unpasteurized milk. Milk sold in grocery stores is pasteurized.

“Drinking unpasteurized milk is dangerous for everyone. Parents need to be particularly aware that giving this milk to children can result in very serious illness and can lead to death,” Dr. Basrur said. “Anyone with nausea, fever, vomiting or diarrhea who consumed unpasteurized milk should contact their doctor immediately.”

Dr. Basrur is also urging members of the public to report sales of unpasteurized milk to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food’s complaint line at 1-888-466-2372 ext. 64391. Barrie area residents can call Health Connection (Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit) at 705-721-7520.

Disease-causing bacteria associated with unpasteurized milk include E. coli O157 as well as salmonella and campylobacter. Symptoms of E. coli O157 include severe stomach cramps and diarrhea (sometimes bloody).

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care continues to investigate the situation in co-operation with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the local public health units in Simcoe Muskoka and Toronto.

- 30 -

For further information:

Members of the media:
Dan Strasbourg
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
416-314-6197

Members of the general public: (416) 327-4327, or (800) 268-1154

This news release, along with other media materials, such as matte stories and audio clips, on other subjects, are available on our website at: <http://www.health.gov.on.ca> under the News Media section.

For more information on achievements in health care, visit: www.resultsontario.gov.on.ca.