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UPDATE ON SALMONELLA OUTBREAK

Agencies Continue to Monitor for Cases and Ensure Food Safety Compliance Standards are Met

TORONTO – A recent Salmonella outbreak linked to consumption of bean sprouts appears to be over, Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Sheela Basrur announced today.

Many varieties of sprouts have been associated with serious foodborne infections in Canada and other countries, and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is advising the public that sprouts are rarely considered ‘risk free.’

“Individuals who are at risk of serious illness from foodborne infections, such as the elderly, people with weak immune systems and young children, should not eat any type of sprouts. Other individuals can reduce their risk of illness by avoiding raw sprouts,” said Dr. Basrur.

Since October 1, 2005, 648 cases of Salmonella have been reported across Ontario.

An order issued by Toronto Public Health on November 25 against a Toronto bean sprout producer to stop distribution of sprouts has been lifted.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care will continue to monitor for Salmonella cases and compile data from this outbreak. The Ministry is also working with local public health units, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the Public Health Agency of Canada to inform bean sprout distributors of compliance requirements and proper food safety techniques.

Salmonella can contaminate raw fruits and vegetables that have been in contact with unclean water, animal manure, or an infected food handler. Symptoms of Salmonella infection include fever, headache, diarrhea, stomach cramps, nausea and sometimes vomiting. Symptoms usually occur 12 to 36 hours after eating contaminated food or water.

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