

Wheeling-Ohio County  
Health Department



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Investigation Announcement: Multistate Outbreak of Human E. coli O145 Infections Linked to Shredded Romaine Lettuce from a Single Processing Facility**  
**Updated May 6, 2010**

Local and state public health officials in Michigan, New York, and Ohio are investigating human illnesses caused by E. coli O145. CDC is supporting these investigations and facilitating regular communication and information sharing between the states and with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

As of May 5, 2010, a total of 19 confirmed and 10 probable cases related to this outbreak have been reported from 3 states since March 1, 2010. The number of ill persons identified in each state with this strain is : MI (10 confirmed and 3 probable), NY (2 confirmed and 5 probable), and OH (7 confirmed and 2 probable).

Among the confirmed and probable cases with reported dates available, illnesses began between April 10, 2010 and April 26, 2010. Infected individuals range in age from 13 years old to 29 years old and the median age is 19 years. Sixty-nine percent of patients are male. Among the 29 patients with available information, 12 (41%) were hospitalized. Three patients have developed a type of kidney failure known as hemolytic-uremic syndrome, or HUS. No deaths have been reported.

The bacteria responsible for this outbreak are referred to as Shiga toxin-producing E. coli, or STEC. STECs have been associated with human illness, including bloody diarrhea and a potentially fatal kidney condition called hemolytic-uremic syndrome (HUS). STEC bacteria are grouped by serotypes (e.g., O157 or O145). The STEC serotype found most commonly in U.S. patients is E. coli O157. Other E. coli serotypes in the STEC group, including O145, are sometimes called “non-O157 STECs.” Currently, there are limited public health surveillance data on the occurrence of non-O157 STECs, including E. coli O145, therefore E.coli O145 may go unreported. Because it is more difficult to identify than E. coli O157, many clinical laboratories do not test for non-O157 STEC infection.

Confirmed cases are persons with:

- (1) E. coli O145 infection, or E. coli infection with O Group pending, AND
- (2) an illness onset on or after March 1, 2010, AND
- (3) a DNA fingerprint matching the outbreak strain; AND
- (4) an epidemiologic link to the outbreak.

Probable cases are persons with an epidemiologic link to the outbreak and

- (1) E. coli O145 infection with an illness onset on or after March 1, 2010 regardless of DNA fingerprint pattern, AND/OR
- (2) hemolytic-uremic syndrome; AND/OR
- (3) a laboratory isolate positive for Shiga toxin 2 [stx2] or isolate positive for Shiga toxin, but toxin type is unknown or pending.

Multiple lines of evidence have implicated shredded romaine lettuce from one processing facility as a source of infection in this outbreak. This evidence includes the identification of E. coli O145 from an unopened package of shredded romaine lettuce obtained from a facility associated with the outbreak. DNA testing to confirm the link to ill persons is pending at this time. The lettuce processing company has issued a recall of lettuce produced at their facility as a result of the evidence obtained to date.

This investigation is ongoing. At this time, local, state, and federal health officials are involved in many different types of investigative activities including:

Most people infected with E. coli develop diarrhea (often bloody) and abdominal cramps 2-8 days (average of 3-4 days) after swallowing the organism, but some illnesses last longer and can be more severe. Infection is usually diagnosed by culture of a stool sample. Many clinical laboratories do not test for non-O157 STEC, such as E. coli O145, because identifying it is more difficult than for E. coli O157. Most people recover within a week, but some develop a severe infection. A type of kidney failure called hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) can begin as the diarrhea is improving; HUS can occur in people of any age but is most common in children under 5 years old and the elderly.

### ***FDA News Release***

#### **Freshway Foods Voluntarily Recalls Products Containing Romaine Lettuce Because of Possible Health Risk**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - May 6, 2010 - Sidney, Ohio – Freshway Foods is voluntarily recalling products containing romaine lettuce with a use by date of May 12 or earlier because they have the potential to be contaminated with Escherichia coli O145 bacteria (E. coli O145). The products were sold under the Freshway brand and Imperial Sysco brand. The company is working with U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to inform consumers of this recall.

This recall includes romaine lettuce products sold by Freshway Foods for food service outlets, wholesale, and in-store retail salad bars and delis; no other products are involved. Freshway Foods does not produce bulk, prepackaged romaine or bagged salad mixes containing romaine for sale in supermarkets, and therefore these products are not included in this recall.

E. coli O145 causes a diarrheal illness 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.

The recalled romaine lettuce products were sold to wholesalers and food service outlets in the following states east of the Mississippi river: Alabama, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. The recalled romaine products were also sold for distribution to in-store salad bars and delis for Kroger, Giant Eagle, Ingles Markets, and Marsh stores in the states listed.

The recall comes after FDA informed Freshway Foods the afternoon of Wednesday, May 5 that a previously unopened product sample in a New York state laboratory tested positive for the bacteria. Freshway Foods traced the entire lot of romaine products and is advising customers to cease use and distribution of it immediately. This recall may be linked to an outbreak investigation in New York, Michigan, and Ohio.

Freshway Foods has kept the FDA and other public health authorities fully apprised of its handling of this matter, and it continues to cooperate with them to identify the cause. An extensive FDA investigation of Freshway Foods' facility in Sidney has not uncovered any contamination at the plant.

"Freshway Foods is committed to our customers and their consumers who enjoy our products every day. We practice strict food safety guidelines to ensure that our products are as safe as possible, and we will continue to look for opportunities for improvement," said Phil Gilardi, President. "We are voluntarily issuing this recall because we want to do everything possible to minimize risk to public health."

Product instructions for consumers and the public at large:

Consumers who purchased romaine from an in-store salad bars and delis at Kroger, Giant Eagle, Ingles Markets, and Marsh stores in the states previously listed should throw the product away.

It is important to note that bulk, prepackaged romaine or bagged salad mixes containing romaine that were purchased in supermarkets are not included in this recall; Freshway Foods does not produce these products.

Consumers with questions may call Freshway Foods' information desk at 1-888-361-7106 (8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, M-F) or visit our web site for updates, [www.freshwayfoods.com](http://www.freshwayfoods.com)1.

Product instructions for food service outlets, wholesalers, and in-store retail salad bars and delis:

This recall includes romaine lettuce products sold by Freshway Foods for sale in food service, wholesale, and in-store salad bars and delis. Please cease use and distribution of all products containing romaine lettuce and sold by Freshway Foods with a USE BY date of May 12 or earlier. Product descriptions are provided below and on our website at [www.freshwayfoods.com2](http://www.freshwayfoods.com2).

Owners of restaurants, in-store salad bars, in-store delis and other food service outlets who have questions may call their Freshway Foods representative, or visit our web site for updates, including disposition of recalled products.

The following products containing romaine lettuce with USE BY dates prior to and including May 12 are being recalled. Please make special note of the item code, which identifies Freshway Foods as the supplier.

Item	Description	Pack Size	Use by Date
<b>Freshway Branded</b>			
73602	CHOP LETTUCE W/ROMAINE	4/5 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
73603	PICCOLO PEZZO	4/5 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
73604	CHOP LETTUCE W/ ROMAINE	4/2.5 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
73605	ROMAINE BLEND 50-50	4/5 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
73607	CHOP LETTUCE W/30% ROMAINE	4/5 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
73609	ROMAINE LETTUCE BLEND SMALL CHOP 3/4" 4/5#	4/5 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
73612	LETTUCE CHOP W/20% ROMAINE 1/2" 4/5#	4/5 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
73615	CHOP LETTUCE W/30% ROMAINE	4/5 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
73624	LETTUCE CHOP W/70% ROMAINE 6/3#	6/3 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
73625	LETTUCE CHOP W/50% ROMAINE 1" x 1" 5/4#	5/4 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
73626	LETTUCE CHOP W/40% ROMAINE 1.5" x 2" 4/5#	4/5 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
73627	LETTUCE BLEND W/20% ROMAINE 2/5# 1.5 x 2	2/5 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
73804	20% ROMAINE SALAD MIX 4/5	4/5 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
73809	LETTUCE BLEND W/SEP COLOR	4/5 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
73811	ITALIAN LETTUCE BLEND	6/2 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
73821	SALAD ROMAINE BLEND W/SEP 4/5#	4/5 lb bags	05/11/2010 and before
73822	ROMAINE BLEND MIXED	4/5 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
73827	SALAD W/35% ROMAINE 5% RC & 5% CARROT	4/5 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
73829	SALAD MIX W/20% ROMAINE	4/5 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
73830	ORIENTAL SALAD KIT 20#	20 lb kit	05/12/2010 and before
73831	ORIENTAL SALAD MIX 4/3#	4/3 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
73842	SALAD MIX W/ROMAINE 6/3#	6/3 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before

73854	SALAD W/30% ROMAINE 5% RC 5% CARROT 4/5#	4/5 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
73855	SALAD MIX STONEY RIVER 4/5#	4/5 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
73865	ROMAINE SALAD W/15% RAD, 10% CAR 10% ENDIVE 4/2.5#	4/2.5 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
74001	ROMAINE CHOPPED 6/2#	6/2 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
74002	ROMAINE SHREDDED 6/2#	6/2 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
74003	1/8" SHREDDED ROMAINE	6/2 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
74006	ROMAINE CHOPPED 9/2#	9/2 lb bags	05/11/2010 and before
74007	ROMAINE CHOPPED 6/2#	6/2 lb bags	05/10/2010 and before
74009	ROMAINE CHOPPED 6/2#	6/2 lb bags	05/11/2010 and before
74010	ROMAINE SHREDDED 1" 6/2#	6/2 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
74011	ROMAINE SHRED 1/4" 6/2#	6/2 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
74013	ROMAINE CHOP 6/2#	6/2 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
74016	ROMAINE CHOPPED 1" X 2" 6/2#	6/2 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
74018	ROMAINE CHOPPED 6/2#	6/2 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
74019	ROMAINE CHOPPED 1X1 6/2#	6/2 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
74025	ROMAINE SLICED 1/2" 9/2#	9/2 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
74027	ROMAINE CHOPPED 6/2#	6/2 lb bags	05/10/2010 and before
74038	ROMAINE CHOP 2" x 2" 3/2#	3/2 lb bags	05/12/2010 and before
74806	GREEK SALAD KIT	6.13 lb kit	05/12/2010 and before
74810	CAESAR SALAD KIT	5.56 lb kit	05/12/2010 and before
74838	KIT GARDEN SALAD SMALL BOWLS 5#	5 lb kit	05/12/2010 and before
74839	KIT CHEF SALAD SMALL BOWLS 5.5#	5.5 lb kit	05/12/2010 and before
74840	KIT CHICKEN CAESAR SMALL BOWLS 4.5#	4.5 lb kit	05/12/2010 and before
74842	KIT - APPLE WALNUT 5.8# 8 bowls	5.8 lb kit	05/12/2010 and before
74843	KIT-GREEK 8 SALAD BOWLS	5.8 lb kit	05/12/2010 and before
74871	KIT - HARVEST BLEND 5.875#	5.875 lb kit	05/12/2010 and before
74873	KIT - CAESAR SALAD 3.81#	3.81 lb kit	05/11/2010 and before
	<b>Imperial Sysco Branded</b>		
73617	LETTUCE CHOP W/50% ROMAINE 4/2.5#	4/2.5 lb bags	05/11/2010 and before
73620	LETTUCE CHOP W/50% ROMAINE 5/4#	5/4 lb bags	05/11/2010 and before
73621	LETTUCE CHOP W/ ROMAINE 4/5#	4/5 lb bags	05/11/2010 and before
73622	LETTUCE CHOP W/50% ROMAINE 5/4#	5/4 lb bags	05/11/2010 and before
73843	SALAD ALL AMERICAN LETTUCE 4/5#	4/5 lb bags	05/11/2010 and before
73844	SALAD SUPERIOR BLEND 2/5#	2/5 lb bags	05/11/2010 and before
73847	SALAD MIX W/ROMAINE 4/5#	4/5 lb bags	05/11/2010 and before
73849	SALAD CALIFORNIA BLEND 4/5#	4/5 lb bags	05/11/2010 and before
73850	SALAD MIX CHARTHOUSE 4/2.5#	4/2.5 lb bags	05/11/2010 and before
73856	SALAD ALL AMERICAN LETTUCE 4/5#	4/5 lb bags	05/11/2010 and before
73857	SALAD ALL AMERICAN LETTUCE 1/5#	1/5 lb bag	05/11/2010 and before
73861	Salad Mix w/Romaine LCR 4/5#	4/5 lb bags	05/11/2010 and before

73862	SALAD MIX SIGNATURE 4/2.5#	4/2.5 lb bags	05/11/2010 and before
73863	SALAD MIX W/ 50% ROMAINE 4/5#	4/5 lb bags	05/11/2010 and before
73864	SALAD MIX W/ 50% ROMAINE 1/5#	1/5 lb bag	05/11/2010 and before
74033	ROMAINE CHOP 6/2#	6/2 lb bags	05/11/2010 and before
74034	Romaine Chop 4/2.5#	4/2.5 lb bags	05/11/2010 and before
74035	Romaine Chop 2/2.5#	2/2.5 lb bags	05/11/2010 and before
74036	Romaine Chop 6/2#	6/2 lb bags	05/11/2010 and before
74037	ROMAINE SHRED 1/4" x 2" 6/2#	6/2 lb bags	05/11/2010 and before
74874	KIT GARDEN SALAD SMALL BOWLS 5#	5 lb kit	05/11/2010 and before
74875	KIT CHEF SALAD SMALL BOWLS 5.5#	5.5 lb kit	05/11/2010 and before
74876	KIT CHICKEN CAESAR SMALL BOWLS 4.5#	4.5 lb kit	05/11/2010 and before