



Environmental
Health

County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

Advisory	Update On Salmonellosis Outbreak Multi-state Investigation
Principal Investigator:	Poki Stewart Namkung, M.D., MPH
Date:	August 14, 2008
Release #:	2008- Jalapeño/Serrano Update 1

INCIDENT

- The U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) continues to investigate an ongoing multi-state outbreak of salmonellosis. The FDA advises all consumers to avoid **raw** jalapeño and serrano peppers, and foods that contain them, such as some types of salsa (like salsa fresca and pico de gallo), **if** the jalapeños or serrano peppers were grown, harvested, or packed in Mexico.
- FDA has **no** indication that jalapeño or serrano peppers grown in the United States are associated with the multi-state outbreak of *Salmonella*. All consumers may continue to eat **canned** jalapeño and serrano peppers processed in a commercial food-processing facility, or foods that contain them; for example, the canned processed jalapeños and processed salsas sold in grocery stores.
- Consumers, especially young children, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems, are susceptible to serious infection when exposed to *Salmonella*.
- Locally, there has been an increase in *Salmonella* infections since July 1st. These cases are not associated with the national outbreak. The Public Health department is working in cooperation with state agencies to determine the source.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT ACTION

- The Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency (HSA) will continue to monitor this situation and will provide additional updates as warranted.
- Local physicians and health care providers are requested to collect stool samples from symptomatic patients for culture, and may contact the HSA Communicable Disease Unit for assistance and additional information by calling (831) 454-4114 during normal business hours, or (831) 471-1180 after normal business hours or on holidays. If patients present with symptoms of foodborne illness, it would be helpful to ask them to write down a detailed list of what foods they ate each day for the 7 day period prior to onset of symptoms with information on when and where the food was purchased.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency advises all consumers to follow the current FDA recommendation to avoid raw jalapeño and serrano peppers, and foods that contain them, such as some types of salsa and pico de gallo, **if** the jalapeño or serrano peppers were grown, harvested, or packed in Mexico.
- Consumers are advised **not** to wash, peel, or cook these kinds of raw peppers to try to get rid of *Salmonella* contamination that may be present. Per the FDA, these actions are **not** likely to get rid of *Salmonella*, which is very hard to remove by conventional means, and might spread the bacterium to hands, sinks, cutting boards, knives, and other foods. Consumers may ask their retailers or food service providers, such as store or restaurant managers, where the jalapeño and serrano peppers they sell were grown, harvested, and packed.

INFORMATION

- *Salmonella* is an organism that can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. Healthy persons infected with *Salmonella* often experience fever, diarrhea (which may be bloody), nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. Consumers who are experiencing the above symptoms should consult their health care provider.
- Consumers, especially young children, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems, are susceptible to serious infection when exposed to *Salmonella*.
- Questions may be directed to Dinah Phillips, Santa Cruz County Public Information Officer at (831) 454-3408.
- Further information is available at the FDA and CDC websites,
 - <http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/tomatoes.html>
 - http://www.cdc.gov/nczved/dfbmd/disease_listing/salmonellosis_gi.html

(www.santacruzhealth.org/alerts for informational updates and other alerts)



- **Health Alert:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.
- **Health Advisory:** provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
- **Health Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.