



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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DISEASE CONTROL UNIT

Poisonous Wild Mushrooms

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For immediate release:

Local Public Health Officials Warn Against Consumption of Wild Mushrooms

INCIDENT

- Six family members from Santa Cruz County became seriously ill after eating 6 different species of mushrooms collected at Wilder Ranch State Park on New Year's Day.
- All six are hospitalized in the San Francisco Bay Area.
- Three of the mushroom species that were consumed were identified by local experts as the non-poisonous *Russula brevipes*, *Russula chamaeleontina*, and *Lyophyllum descates*.
- A fourth species, *Lactarius alnicola*, is mildly toxic.
- Samples of the remaining two species were unavailable for identification, but given the severity of the illnesses they were likely a poisonous species.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Wild mushrooms should not be eaten unless they have been determined edible by a recognized mushroom expert.
- Individuals who develop any of these symptoms--abdominal pain, cramping, vomiting, and/or diarrhea after eating wild mushrooms should immediately contact the California Poison Control System at 1-800-8-POISON (1-800-876-4766) or 1-800-222-1222 and seek immediate medical attention.

INFORMATION

- In past years, multiple hospitalizations, gastrointestinal illnesses and even deaths, have been caused by the consumption of wild mushrooms.
- The deaths have been linked to the *Amanita ocreata* mushroom, also known as the "destroying angel" and the *Amanita phalloides* mushroom, commonly called the "death cap" mushroom.
- Eating poisonous mushrooms can cause abdominal pain, cramping, vomiting, diarrhea, liver damage and death-- the symptoms usually occur 6 to 12 hours after ingestion. Once the gastrointestinal symptoms subside, liver damage may appear.
- In 2006, 916 cases of human mushroom poisoning were reported to the California Poison Control system. Of those cases 370 were treated in healthcare facilities, 63% had a moderate health effect, 10 had a major health outcome and 48% were under 6 years of age.

- In Santa Cruz County, the most commonly found poisonous mushrooms are:
Amanita phalloides (starting to fruit right now)
Several other members of the Amanita species
Galerina autumnalis (deadly)
Cortinarius species
- Mushroom resources recommended by the Fungus Federation of Santa Cruz County are:
<http://www.fungusfed.org>, www.namyco.org and www.mykoweb.com.

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.