

# NEWS

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Department of Public Health and Human Services

[www.dphhs.mt.gov](http://www.dphhs.mt.gov)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 21, 2018

Contact: Jon Belt, Public Information Officer, DPHHS, (406) 444-0936  
Chuck Council, Communications Specialist, DPHHS, (406) 444-4391

# CDC, DPHHS warn consumers not to eat any romaine lettuce

State, local and federal public health officials in several states are investigating an outbreak of Shiga toxin-producing E. coli O157 cases linked to romaine lettuce.

There are currently 32 cases in 11 states, with **no cases reported in Montana**. However, 13 people have been hospitalized in other states.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advises consumers not to buy or eat any romaine lettuce, and restaurants and retailers not to sell or serve any.

Further, consumers anywhere in the United States who have any store-bought romaine lettuce at home should not eat it and should throw it away. “Even if some of it was eaten and no one has gotten sick, it should still be tossed out,” said Jim Murphy of the DPHHS Public Health and Safety Division.

Murphy said this includes whole heads and hearts of romaine, chopped romaine, and salads and salad mixes containing romaine lettuce. “If you do not know if the lettuce is romaine, do not eat it and throw it away,” Murphy advises.

The investigation is ongoing. DPHHS has launched a website page to help Montanans track new information as it becomes available. The page can be accessed by going to [dphhs.mt.gov](http://dphhs.mt.gov).

The current outbreak is not related to the recent multi-state outbreak of E. coli O157 infections linked to romaine lettuce in the spring of 2018.

Symptoms of E. coli O157 infection vary for each person, but often include severe stomach cramps, diarrhea (often bloody), and vomiting. Most people get better within 5 to 7 days. Some infections are very mild, but others are severe or even life-threatening.

Most people with an E. coli O157 infection start feeling sick 3 to 4 days after eating or drinking something that contains the bacteria, but illnesses can start anywhere from 1 to 10 days after exposure.

Those who have symptoms of an E. coli O157 infection are urged to talk to their medical provider.