



September 18, 2006

To: Health Care Providers in Douglas County

From: Adi M. Pour, Ph.D., Health Director

Re: **First Confirmed Case of *E.coli* O157:H7 related to the National Spinach Outbreak**

The following information will be released to the media on Monday morning, September 19, 2006.

**Douglas County Health Department Reports First Confirmed Case of *E.coli* O157:H7 related to the National Spinach Outbreak**

OMAHA, NEBRASKA – The Douglas County Health Department is reporting the first infection associated with the outbreak strain of *E. coli* O157:H7 related to fresh spinach consumption. “The individual is in the 18 – 64 years age group, consumed spinach, became ill but was never hospitalized and has fully recovered” says Adi Pour, Douglas County Health Department Director.

At this time, the Douglas County Health Department is investigating several other reported *E.coli* O157:H7 infections to determine if the strains are identical to the one that has been identified in connection with the current outbreak.

As of September 17, 2006, 109 persons infected with the outbreak strain of *E. coli* O157:H7 have been reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) from 19 states. Among the ill persons, 55 (50 %) were hospitalized, 16 (15 %) developed Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS), and an adult in Wisconsin has died.

*E. coli* O157:H7 infection can cause diarrhea, often with bloody stools. Most healthy individuals recover completely within a week, however, the very young and elderly are at a greater risk of developing a form of kidney failure called Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS), which can be fatal.

The Douglas County Health Department together with FDA and CDC is making the following recommendations: “Do not eat *any* fresh spinach or salad blends containing fresh spinach that are consumed raw. Persons who have developed diarrhea after consuming fresh spinach or salad blends containing fresh spinach are urged to contact their health care provider and ask that their stool specimen be tested for *E. coli* O157,” says Adi Pour. On average, it takes about 3 – 4 days after ingesting the organism to become ill, although it could be as early as one day or as long as a week.

Natural Selection Foods, LLC, of San Juan Bautista, California, is recalling all of its products containing spinach in all brands they packed with “Best if Used by Dates” of August 17, 2006 through October 1, 2006. These products include spinach and any salad with spinach in a blend, both retail and food service products. (Recall updates available on FDA website: <http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/spinach.htm>)

THE DOUGLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT WILL POST UPDATED CASE COUNTS EVERY DAY BY NOON ON THE DOUGLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT WEBSITE AT [www.douglascountyhealth.com](http://www.douglascountyhealth.com)

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The Douglas County Health Department website includes links to the CDC and the FDA for further information and situation updates.

**Please report all confirmed and suspected cases of *E. coli* O157 immediately to the Douglas County Health Department Epidemiology Section at 444-7214 during working hours or to 444-7000 after hours or on weekends.**