

Genesee County Health Dept: Death Linked to Nationwide Listeria Outbreak

Batavia, N.Y. (Oct. 19, 2011) - A Genesee County death from Listeria is connected with a nationwide Listeria outbreak. Genesee County health officials said the death of an elderly person with underlying health conditions is linked to the outbreak tied to Colorado cantaloupes. This is the second confirmed case in New York State; the first confirmed case involved an elderly individual from Ontario County.

More than 120 people, in 25 other states, have become infected with the *Listeria* bacterial strain linked to the Rocky Ford Cantaloupe from Jensen Farms in Colorado. Including both the Genesee and Ontario county cases, 25 people have died nationwide.

Listeriosis is caused by the bacteria, *Listeria monocytogenes*. This organism has been found in a variety of raw foods, such as uncooked meats and vegetables, as well as in foods that become contaminated after cooking or processing.

Listeria can cause serious illness and sometimes be fatal in older adults, pregnant women, newborns, and those individuals with weakened immune systems.

Symptoms include fever, intense headache, nausea, vomiting and signs of meningeal irritation. In most cases, Listeria infection causes fever and influenza-like symptoms resembling many other illnesses. Individuals who have experienced any symptoms of Listeria should contact a doctor or other health care provider.

Listeria has a variable incubation period. It can range from three to 70 days, but symptoms usually appear within a month.

Additional information:

- On September 14, 2011 Jensen Farms in Colorado voluntarily recalled Rocky Ford Cantaloupe.
- Cantaloupes **not** from Jensen Farms are safe to eat.
- If consumers are uncertain about the source of a cantaloupe for purchase, they should ask the grocery store. When in doubt – throw it out.
- More information can be found at the [CDC Multistate Outbreak of Listeriosis](#) of Web site.