

Sept. 28, 2008

News media calls to David Hass at (630) 682-7979, ext. 7374.

## **State public health director warns of E coli contaminated lettuce**

Dr. Damon T. Arnold, Director for the Illinois Department of Public Health is warning Illinoisans about iceberg lettuce distributed by Aunt Mid's Produce Company. The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has identified Aunt Mid's Produce Company as the distributor of iceberg lettuce consumed by six Illinois residents during late August to mid-September who have been diagnosed with E coli 0157.

The Michigan Department of Community Health has also identified Aunt Mid's Produce Company as one of the wholesale processors who sold institutional-sized iceberg lettuce to establishments which served 26 people who were diagnosed with the same strain of E coli.

Based on preliminary information, IDPH is advising restaurants and facilities that purchase large quantities of lettuce, not to buy iceberg lettuce distributed by Aunt Mid's. These facilities should also not use Aunt Mid's iceberg lettuce they have until additional information is available.

IDPH is working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention laboratory to test persons suspected of being linked to this outbreak and to trace-back where the lettuce came from. Aunt Mid's Produce Company has voluntarily suspended any processing and sale of its iceberg lettuce product line throughout the United States.

At this time, it does not appear Aunt Mid's iceberg lettuce has been sold in grocery stores.

E coli can cause diarrhea, often bloody diarrhea. Although most healthy adults recover completely within a week, some people can develop a form of kidney failure, which can lead to serious kidney damage and event death.

People who have symptoms and believe they may have eaten this lettuce should contact their doctor. Health care providers who suspect this strain of E coli should order cultures at report suspected cases to their local health department.

*Everyone, Everywhere, Everyday*

In an emergency go to [www.protectdupage.org](http://www.protectdupage.org) and tune to WDCB 90.9 FM radio.