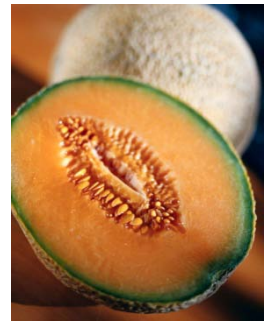


Listeriosis - Advice to Consumers

(September 26, 2011)



Contaminated cantaloupes may still be in grocery stores and in consumers' homes.

- CDC recommends that persons at high risk for listeriosis, including older adults, persons with weakened immune systems, and pregnant women, do not eat cantaloupes marketed as coming from the Rocky Ford region of Colorado.
- Consumers who have cantaloupes in their homes can check the label or inquire at the store where they purchased it to determine if the fruit was marketed as coming from the Rocky Ford region of Colorado
- Listeriosis primarily affects older adults, persons with weakened immune systems, pregnant women, and newborns. Persons who think they might have become ill from eating possible contaminated cantaloupes should consult their doctor immediately.
- Cantaloupes marketed as coming from the Rocky Ford region should be disposed of in a closed plastic bag placed in a sealed trash can. This will prevent people or animals from eating them.

Food items other than cantaloupe can also carry *Listeria* bacteria. People at high risk for listeriosis and those who prepare their meals can take steps to lower the risk.

- Rinse raw produce, such as fruits and vegetables, thoroughly under running tap water before eating. Dry the produce with a clean cloth or paper towel before cutting them up.
- Thoroughly cook raw meat and poultry.
- Heat hot dogs, deli meats, and cold cuts until they are steaming hot just before serving.
- Do not drink raw (unpasteurized) milk and do not eat fresh soft cheese that has unpasteurized milk in them, especially Mexican style cheeses like queso fresco.
- Be sure that your refrigerator is at or below 40 degrees F, and your freezer is at or below 0 degrees F by using a refrigerator thermometer.
- Follow general food safety guidelines for preparing food, such as those at FoodSafety.gov

General Melon Safety Advice:

- Consumers and food preparers should wash their hands before and after handling any whole melon, such as cantaloupe, watermelon, or honeydew.
- Wash the melons and dry them with a clean cloth or paper towel before cutting.
- Cut melon should be promptly consumed or refrigerated at or less than 40 degrees F (32-34 degrees F is optimal for storage of cut melon).
- Cut melons left at room temperature form for more than 4 hours should be discarded.

