



# Ohio Department of Agriculture and Ohio Department of Health



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To: Health Commissioners, Environmental Health Directors, Nursing Directors,  
ODA Food Safety Specialists, and Other Interested Parties

Subject: *Salmonella Saintpaul Outbreak*

Date: July 15, 2008

## **Salmonella Saintpaul Outbreak** **Updated: by U.S. Food and Drug Association July 11, 2008**

### ***Introduction***

FDA is updating its warning to consumers nationwide concerning the outbreak of *Salmonella* serotype Saintpaul.

Although epidemiological and other evidence continues to have a strong association with certain raw tomatoes, a recent case control study and disease cluster information provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicate that not only tomatoes, but also raw jalapeno and serrano peppers may be linked to illnesses in this continuing outbreak.

**At this time, the FDA is advising people in high risk populations such as elderly persons, infants and people with impaired immune systems to avoid eating raw jalapeno and raw serrano peppers.**

In addition, the FDA continues to advise consumers to avoid eating raw red plum, red Roma, or red round tomatoes except for those grown in the areas listed below. Tomatoes grown in those areas have not been associated with the outbreak.

Consumers who are unsure of the origin of the tomatoes in their home should contact the store or place of purchase. If consumers are unable to determine the source of the tomatoes, they should not eat them. Types of tomatoes not associated with this outbreak include cherry tomatoes, grape tomatoes, tomatoes sold with the vine still attached, and tomatoes grown at home.

### ***Update on the Outbreak***

At this time, FDA recommends consuming raw red plum, raw red Roma, or raw red round tomatoes only if grown and harvested from the following areas that **HAVE NOT BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE OUTBREAK:**

- Alabama
- Alaska
- Arkansas

- California
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Delaware
- Florida (counties of: Jackson, Gadsden, Leon, Jefferson, Madison, Suwannee, Hamilton, Hillsborough, Polk, Manatee, Hardee, DeSoto, Sarasota, Highlands, Pasco, Sumter, Citrus, Hernando, Charlotte)\*
- Georgia
- Hawaii
- Idaho **New!**
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Maine
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Nebraska
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- New York
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Oklahoma

- Pennsylvania
- Rhode Island **New!**
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Utah
- Vermont
- Virginia
- Washington
- West Virginia
- Wisconsin
- Belgium
- Canada
- Dominican Republic
- Guatemala
- Israel
- Mexican States (Aguascalientes, Baja California Norte, Baja California Sur, Campeche, Colima, Chiapas, Chihuahua, Coahuila **New!**, Distrito Federal, Durango, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Hidalgo, México, Michoacán, Morelos, Nayarit, Nuevo León, Oaxaca, Puebla, Querétaro, Quintana Roo, San Luis Potosí, Sonora, Tabasco, Tamaulipas, Tlaxcala, Veracruz, Yucatán, Zacatecas)
- Netherlands
- Puerto Rico

*\* Shipments of tomatoes harvested in these counties are acceptable with a certificate issued by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.*

Since April, 1065 persons infected with *Salmonella* Saintpaul with the same genetic fingerprint have been identified in 42 states, the District of Columbia, and Canada.

## ***Advice for Retailers, Restaurateurs and Food Service Operators***

FDA recommends that retailers, restaurateurs, and food service operators offer only fresh and fresh cut red Roma, red plum, and round red tomatoes and food products made from these tomatoes for sale or service from the sources listed above.

FDA further recommends that retailers, restaurateurs, and food service operators continue to offer cherry tomatoes, grape tomatoes, and tomatoes sold with the vine still attached, from any source.

### **Safe-handling practices for fresh produce for food-service providers, retailers, and restaurateurs**

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water before and after handling fresh produce.
- Make sure that food employees are reporting illness and are not working while sick.
- Purchase food from known safe sources and maintain its safety from time of receiving through service.
- When fresh produce is received, follow supplier recommendations, if provided, regarding handling, storage temperatures, "use by" dates, and other recommendations for the produce. Avoid receiving or using damaged and partially decayed produce.
- Store raw produce such that it does not contaminate other foods with soil, etc. Store any fresh produce, whole or cut, where other products – especially raw meat and poultry – cannot cross-contaminate it.
- Segregate fresh produce from other refrigerated foods in refrigeration units by using a separate set of storage racks or separate cooler, if possible. Cover and store washed cut produce above unwashed, uncut fresh produce. Store all produce off the floor.
- Wash, rinse, and sanitize all sinks, utensils, cutting boards, slicers, and food preparation surfaces before use with fresh produce.
- Always wash fresh produce under running, potable water before use. Soaking produce or storing it in standing water is not recommended for most types of fresh produce. Commercial, "fresh-cut" tomatoes and other produce have already been washed before processing and should be considered ready-to-eat with no further need for washing unless the label says otherwise.
- Refrigerate foods prepared with fresh-produce ingredients.
- Do not re-serve freshly prepared dishes containing raw produce, including dishes made with raw tomatoes, cilantro, and hot peppers, such as salsa and guacamole.