

For Immediate Release
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SALMONELLA OUTBREAK CONFIRMED IN ONTARIO *Public Advised To Avoid Eating Mung Bean Sprouts*

TORONTO – Dr. Sheela Basrur, Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health, today confirmed that Ontario is experiencing an outbreak of salmonella. Preliminary investigations indicate that the source of the outbreak is mung bean sprouts.

The public is being advised to avoid eating mung bean sprouts until the source of this outbreak is confirmed.

Since the beginning of November, 266 laboratory-confirmed cases of salmonella have been reported to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Normally, 20-25 cases are reported per month at this time of year.

“Salmonella can cause serious illness, and in very rare cases death, for the very young, elderly and those with weakened immune systems,” said Dr. Basrur. “If you have mung bean sprouts in your fridge, do not eat them. If you have eaten sprouts at home or in a restaurant, and are experiencing illness, contact your physician immediately.”

Salmonella can spread from person-to-person. If an infected individual has diarrhea and is preparing food for others, caring for young children, elderly or sick people, meticulous hand washing is important to further prevent the spread of illness.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is working with local public health units, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and the Public Health Agency of Canada to investigate the matter further and confirm the source of the outbreak. To date, 21 health units are involved in the investigation.

Salmonella is a naturally-occurring bacteria found in the intestines of animals, particularly poultry, cattle and swine. Salmonella can contaminate raw fruits and vegetables, including sprouts, that have been in contact with unclean water, animal manure, or an infected food handler. Symptoms of salmonella include fever, headache, diarrhea, stomach cramps, nausea and sometimes vomiting. Symptoms occur 12 to 36 hours after eating contaminated food or water.

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