

Four cases of listeriosis, a foodborne illness, have been confirmed in Nebraska residents, and all appear to be associated with an outbreak connected to Colorado-grown cantaloupe. An additional case is suspect and undergoing lab testing.

“Analysis shows that the strains of listeria that are being investigated in Colorado match the ones identified in the cases here,” said Dr. Joann Schaefer, Chief Medical Officer for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.

All of the ill adults in Nebraska are elderly, she said. All have been or are currently hospitalized. Two cases are from Douglas County, one from Gage and one from Hitchcock.

The multi-state outbreak of listeriosis has been linked to Rocky Ford cantaloupe. The FDA has announced a voluntary recall of cantaloupe from Jensen Farms of Granada, Colo.

The CDC is recommending that persons at high risk for listeriosis not eat Rocky Ford cantaloupe from Jensen Farms. Those most at risk are older adults, pregnant women, newborns and persons with weakened immune systems. Healthy children and adults rarely become seriously ill.

Listeriosis is a bacterial infection. Symptoms include fever, muscle aches, nausea and diarrhea.

To keep food safe:

- Rinse raw fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running tap water before eating;
- Keep uncooked meats separate from fruits and vegetables, cooked foods and ready-to-eat foods;
- Wash hands, knives, countertops and cutting boards after handling and preparing uncooked foods;
- Maintain your refrigerator at 40 degrees F. or lower; clean the inside walls and shelves with hot water and liquid soap.