



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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For Immediate Release: April 28, 2009

09-028

**RAW ALFALFA SPROUTS LINKED TO SALMONELLA
CONTAMINATION**

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) recommended today that consumers not eat raw alfalfa sprouts, including sprout blends containing alfalfa sprouts, until further notice because the product has been linked to *Salmonella* serotype Saintpaul contamination. Other types of sprouts have not been implicated at this time. This follows the recommendation issued yesterday by the U.S Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Although there have been no confirmed salmonella cases attributable to alfalfa sprouts in Hawai'i, the DOH Food and Drug Branch will be pulling samples from local alfalfa sprout growers for testing. There are local sprout growers on every island in Hawai'i.

“While there are no salmonella cases in our state stemming from alfalfa sprouts, we are taking a proactive and precautionary approach and will be sampling product from local growers even though they do already disinfect seeds prior to growing,” said Lynn Nakasone, program manager for the DOH Environmental Health Administration.

The DOH recommends at all times that persons at high risk for complications, such as the elderly, young children, and those with compromised immune systems, not eat raw sprouts because of the risk of contamination with *Salmonella* or other bacteria. *Salmonella* is an organism that can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly

people, and others with weakened immune systems. Healthy individuals infected with *Salmonella* often experience fever, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. In rare circumstances, infection with *Salmonella* can result in the organism getting into the bloodstream and producing more severe illnesses, such as meningitis and bone infections.

The FDA Web site contains detailed information on reducing microbial safety hazards for sprouted seeds. Visit <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/sprougd1.html> to see the guidance.

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