

# CDC Food Safety Alert: Whole onions identified as the source of large ongoing Salmonella outbreak

## Key Points:

- 652 people have been reported sick from 37 states, and 129 people have been hospitalized. No deaths have been reported.
- Epidemiologic and traceback data show that one source of infections in this outbreak are whole red, white, and yellow onions imported from Chihuahua, Mexico, and distributed throughout the United States by ProSource Inc.
- CDC advises people who have unlabeled whole red, white, or yellow onions at home to throw them away and not eat them. People should not eat, and businesses should not sell or serve, whole onions that were imported from Chihuahua, Mexico, and distributed by ProSource Inc.
- Interviews with sick people show that 75% of people ate or possibly ate raw onions or dishes likely containing raw onions before they became sick. Several ill people reported eating at the same restaurants, indicating they may be part of illness clusters.
- The outbreak strain was identified in a sample of cilantro and lime from a restaurant condiment cup collected from a sick person's home. The sick person also reported that the cup contained onions, though none were left in the cup when it was tested.
- Investigators determined that ProSource Inc. supplied whole onions to many of the restaurants where sick people ate, including to the restaurant where the condiment cup was collected.
- Investigators are working to determine if other onions or suppliers are linked to this outbreak.

## **What You Should Do:**

- Do not buy or eat any whole fresh red, white, or yellow onions if they were imported from Chihuahua, Mexico, and distributed by ProSource Inc.
- Throw away any whole red, white, or yellow onions you have at home that do not have a sticker or packaging.
- Wash surfaces and containers that may have touched the onions using hot soapy water or a dishwasher.
- Contact a healthcare provider if you have severe Salmonella symptoms.

## **About Salmonella:**

- Most people infected with Salmonella develop diarrhea, fever, and stomach cramping 6 hours to 6 days after eating contaminated food.
- The illness usually lasts 4 to 7 days, and most people recover without treatment.
- In some people, the illness may be so severe that the patient is hospitalized. Salmonella infection may spread from the intestines to the bloodstream and then to other parts of the body.
- Children younger than 5, adults 65 and older, and people with weakened immune systems are more likely to have severe illness.

If you have questions about cases in a particular state, please call that state's health department.