

DPH Update on E.coli Outbreak Linked to Oak Leaf Farm in Lebanon

The State Department of Public Health (DPH) today issued the following update on the E.coli outbreak linked to the Oak Leaf Farm in Lebanon, CT:

As of 1:00 p.m. today, DPH is investigating 15 confirmed cases of E.coli O157 infection. The number of cases could increase in the near future as DPH is actively identifying individuals who were not initially reported.

So far, investigators have been able to link 14 of these cases to Oak Leaf Farm. The patients range in age from 1-44 years old, with a median age of six. In total, five patients have been hospitalized with three still in the hospital. Two of the hospitalized patients have been diagnosed with Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS), as first reported last week.

Yesterday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) dispatched a team to Connecticut to assist in the investigation of this outbreak. Today, officials from DPH, the Connecticut Department of Agriculture, the Uncas Health District, and the CDC team are at the Oak Leaf Farm conducting an onsite investigation. The Farm remains voluntarily closed to the public, and the owners are cooperating with the investigation.

"We received numerous phone calls and emails over the last several days from people who visited Oak Leaf Farm in March. Those calls, both from individuals who may have been sickened and from individuals who've had no symptoms, are highly valuable to our ongoing investigation," said DPH Commissioner Raul Pino. "I continue to encourage anyone who visited the farm in March and developed symptoms of this illness to contact their physician. Additionally, I ask anyone who visited the farm in March to email or call DPH to let us know when you visited and if you or your family members have experienced any symptoms of E.coli."

The outbreak was first identified on Thursday, March 24th when six of seven individuals sickened with E.coli were confirmed by DPH to have recently visited Oak Leaf Farm and come into contact with goats on the farm. Two of the seven initial patients had subsequently developed Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS), a rare but serious illness that affects the kidneys and blood clotting system. As of today, both of those patients continue to be hospitalized.

Typical symptoms of E.coli can include abdominal cramping, watery, frequently bloody diarrhea, vomiting, and a low-grade fever. Symptoms usually resolve over several days. The best way to prevent the spread of infection is to wash your hands thoroughly after contact with animals and after going to the bathroom and

by thoroughly cooking meats and washing fruits and vegetables. E.coli can easily spread, especially among household members, if proper handwashing is not consistently used.

Anyone who visited Oak Leaf Farm in March is encouraged to contact DPH at 860-509-7994 or webmaster.dph@ct.gov. According to the state Department of Agriculture, anyone who purchased a goat from Oak Leaf Farm in the past month and has any concerns should contact their livestock veterinarian.

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