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Through: Kansas City, Missouri Health Department (KCHD)

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Subject: **Outbreak of *Salmonella* Saintpaul Infections Associated With Consumption of Raw Tomatoes**



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Public health officials are currently investigating an ongoing multi-state outbreak of human *Salmonella* serotype Saintpaul infections. Epidemiologic investigations conducted in New Mexico and Texas have identified consumption of raw tomatoes as the likely source of the illnesses in those states. The specific type and source of tomatoes is under investigation; however, the data suggest that large tomatoes, including Roma and round red, are the source, and that the implicated tomatoes are distributed throughout much of the country.

Ten cases of *S. Saintpaul* have been reported in Missouri residents since May 25, 2008. Two of these cases are known to have a history of tomato consumption; investigation of the other 8 cases is pending.

Most persons infected with *Salmonella* develop diarrhea, fever, and abdominal cramps 12 – 72 hours after infection. Infection is usually diagnosed by culture of a stool sample. The illness usually lasts 4 – 7 days.

Persons infected with *S. Saintpaul* through consumption of raw tomatoes could continue to present for care to Missouri medical providers. Patients with signs/symptoms compatible with salmonellosis should be asked about recent consumption of raw tomatoes. Although most persons with salmonellosis recover without treatment, severe infections can occur, and *Salmonella* may spread from the intestines to the bloodstream, and then to other body sites and can cause death. Infants (<1 year old), elderly persons, and those with impaired immune systems are more likely to develop serious disease. Medical providers are encouraged to obtain stool cultures (and blood cultures, if indicated) from any individual in one of these at-risk groups if he or she has diarrhea and possible exposure to tomatoes. These at-risk persons should also be treated with antibiotics if salmonella infection is suspected, pending test results or until an alternative diagnosis is established.

All known or suspected cases of salmonellosis, whether or not they are thought to be associated with this outbreak, should be reported to the Kansas City, MO Health Department (816-513-6152) or to the Health Department in your jurisdiction. Medical laboratories should send all *Salmonella* isolates to the Missouri State Public Health Laboratory for further characterization.

Current information on the outbreak is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at <http://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/saintpaul/>.

Additional information, including consumer recommendations, is available from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) at <http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/tomatoes.html>