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Chipotle Restaurant *E. coli* cases

Stanislaus County – The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued a national consumer advisory regarding the number of *E. coli* cases (of the O26 strain) associated with consumption of food items at Chipotle restaurants throughout six (6) states. To date, 45 confirmed cases have been reported nationally. The CDC, in addition to other federal, state and local public health partners, has not identified the specific cause of this multi-state outbreak. California is reporting two confirmed cases of illness due to *E. coli* O26 infection associated with food consumption at Chipotle restaurants. To date, there have been no (0) cases of such illness reported for Stanislaus County residents. The Health Services Agency/Public Health Division (HSA/PH) continues to monitor the situation and is ready to respond if cases are reported. HSA/PH is also working with the California Department of Public Health and other California counties to investigate any consumer complaints or concerns. HSA/PH is supporting the Stanislaus County Department of Environmental Resources, which has the authority to inspect and regulate restaurants. If the need arises, HSA/PH is prepared to assist healthcare partners in obtaining appropriate laboratory testing to identify and confirm cases of illness.

There are several symptoms associated with *E. coli* O26 infection. The symptoms may vary for each person, but typically include severe stomach cramps, diarrhea (often bloody), and vomiting. Federal officials have not yet identified the specific cause of this multi-state outbreak.

Cases of *E. coli* O26 (and related strains) are typically associated with consumption of undercooked beef, cross contamination of one food product with another or consuming foods which have not undergone further cooking, such as lettuce, tomatoes or other raw food items. Symptoms usually begin three to four days after the exposure, but may be as short as one day or as long as 10 days. The symptoms often begin slowly with mild belly pain or non-bloody diarrhea that worsens over several days. Most people recover within five to seven days, however; children, pregnant women, and people with other underlying illnesses should seek immediate treatment if they suspect infection. Severe cases of *E. coli* infection may lead to hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), which is a severe type of kidney failure.

To prevent transmission of *E. coli*, the following precautions should be taken:

- Wash your hands thoroughly after using the bathroom or changing diapers and before preparing or eating food. WASH YOUR HANDS after contact with animals or their environments (at farms, petting zoos, fairs, even your own backyard).
- Cook meats thoroughly. Ground beef and meat that has been needle-tenderized should be cooked to a temperature of at least 160°F/70°C. It's best to use a thermometer, as color is not a very reliable indicator of "doneness."
- Avoid raw milk, unpasteurized dairy products, and unpasteurized juices (like fresh apple cider).
- Avoid swallowing water when swimming or playing in lakes, ponds, streams, swimming pools, and backyard "kiddie" pools.
- Prevent cross contamination in food preparation areas by thoroughly washing hands, counters, cutting boards, and utensils after they touch raw meat.

To learn more about how to protect yourself from *E. coli* and get additional information on what regions/states are affected, please visit the following website:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/2015/o26-11-15/index.html>