



MEDIA ADVISORY
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Proper preparation and handling prevents foodborne illnesses

The Kane County Health Department would like to remind residents of the proper ways to handle and prepare food to prevent foodborne illnesses. This health protection reminder comes as a result of an investigation that has shown that illnesses from Salmonella have been discovered recently that are associated with frozen, stuffed raw chicken products that may be contaminated with Salmonella.

Although no illnesses associated with the frozen chicken have been reported in Illinois, the products have been distributed to retail establishments in our state, as well as Indiana, Minnesota, North Dakota, Vermont and Wisconsin.

“It is especially important that these products be cooked in a conventional oven. All poultry products should be cooked to a safe minimum internal temperature of 165° Fahrenheit as determined by a food thermometer,” said Health Department Executive Director Paul Kuehnert said. “Using a food thermometer is the only way to know that food has reached a high enough temperature to destroy foodborne bacteria.”

Frozen raw chicken breast products covered by this alert and similar products, may be stuffed or filled, breaded or browned such that they appear to be cooked. These items may be labeled “chicken cordon bleu,” “chicken kiev” or chicken breast stuffed with cheese, vegetables or other items. A public health alert was initiated after an investigation and testing conducted by the Minnesota Department of Health and Minnesota Department of Agriculture determined that there is an association between the products listed below and two illnesses. The illnesses were linked through the epidemiological

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investigation by their PFGE pattern (DNA fingerprint).

Products linked to the illnesses were produced by Serenade Foods, a Milford, Ind., establishment. Products include “Chicken Breast with Rib Meat Chicken Cordon Bleu” and “Chicken Breast with Rib Meat Buffalo Style” sold under the brand names “Milford Valley Farms,” “Dutch Farms” and “Kirkwood.” The individually wrapped, 6-ounce products were produced on January 21, 2008 (date code C8021 is printed on the side of the package).

Each of these packages bears the establishment number “Est. P-2375” inside the USDA mark of inspection. These specific products were distributed to retail establishments in Illinois,

Consumption of food contaminated with Salmonella can cause salmonellosis, one of the most common bacterial foodborne illnesses. Salmonella infections can be life-threatening, especially to those with weak immune systems, such as infants, the elderly and persons with HIV infection or undergoing chemotherapy. The most common manifestations of salmonellosis are diarrhea, abdominal cramps, and fever within eight to 72 hours. Additional symptoms may be chills, headache, nausea and vomiting that can last up to seven days.

Recommendations for Preventing Salmonellosis:

- Wash hands with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling raw
- meat and poultry.
- Wash cutting boards, dishes and utensils with hot soapy water.
- Clean up spills right away.
- Keep raw meat, fish and poultry away from other food that will not be cooked.
- Use separate cutting boards for raw meat, poultry and egg products and cooked foods.
- Cook raw meat and poultry to safe internal temperatures before eating.
- The safe internal temperature for meat such as beef and pork is 160° F, and 165° F for poultry, as determined with a food thermometer.
- Refrigerate raw meat and poultry within two hours after purchase (one hour if temperatures exceed 90° F).
- Refrigerate cooked meat and poultry within two hours after cooking.

More information on food handling/preparation is available from the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline, 1-888-MPHOTLINE or visiting www.fsis.usda.gov.

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