

Cucumbers blamed for deadly German E. coli outbreak

May 26 2011

Cucumbers from Spain have been confirmed as one of the sources responsible for an outbreak in Germany of E.Coli, a potentially lethal food-borne bacteria, the European Commission said Thursday.

The EU executive said it had notified the 27 members of the European Union "about one of the confirmed sources responsible" for the outbreak, principally in Germany where it is blamed for two deaths, but also in Sweden, Denmark, Britain and the Netherlands.

A commission statement said it had been informed by the German authorities late Thursday that they had identified organic cucumbers from two provinces of Spain -- Alneria and Malaga -- as one of the sources.

A third suspect batch of cucumbers from the Netherlands, but traded in Germany, was under investigation while German authorities continue to seek to identify other potential sources.

The commission earlier urged people who recently visited Germany to watch for symptoms such as [bloody diarrhoea](#).

"People who have recently visited Germany should pay attention to symptoms, such as bloody diarrhoea, and accordingly consult their physician," said Frederic Vincent, the commission spokesman for [health issues](#).

The commission stressed that it was "essential" to rapidly identify potential cases "to prevent the development of severe disease."

German authorities believe raw vegetables are the most likely source of the [outbreak](#) of enterohaemorrhagic E. coli (EHEC), which causes haemolytic uraemic syndrome (HUS), a disease that can result in [acute renal failure](#), [seizures](#), strokes and coma.

Germany's national disease centre, the Robert Koch Institute, says that more than 200 people have been diagnosed as suffering from HUS, and that at least two people have died.

The commission said 214 cases had been recorded in Germany, with 68 percent concerning women. Sweden has reported 10, Denmark four, Britain three and the Netherlands one.

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