



FOR RELEASE
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Yukoners advised to follow safe food handling practices

WHITEHORSE—In response to the expanding recall of beef products from the Alberta-based XL Foods plant, Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. Brendan Hanley, is working with Yukon health practitioners and Environmental Health Services to monitor the local situation. At this time, no cases of E. coli have been reported in Yukon as a result of the XL Foods recall.

"Yukon receives most of its meat from Alberta and British Columbia," Hanley said. "Yukoners should check their refrigerators and freezers for beef products that may have been affected by the recall and return them to the point of sale for a refund. When in doubt, throw it out."

To date, affected Yukon retailers include: Great Canadian Superstore, Extra Foods, Super A Foods and Bigway Foods.

While food recalls fall under the authority of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Environmental Health Services, a unit of Yukon Health and Social Services, follows up with Yukon retailers to ensure the affected products have been removed from local shelves.

"Consuming questionable beef is not a good idea, no matter how well you cook it," Hanley added.

Hanley says if people have beef that did not come from XL Foods, it can be consumed with normal food handling precautions. However, any beef that was distributed by XL Foods should be treated with caution, even if it is not presently on the recall list, as the list is expanding daily. Hanley adds that it may be a good idea to hold in the freezer any beef products that could have come from XL Foods, but are not on the recall list, until the recall is over.

Most strains of E. coli are harmless. Some strains, however, such as the O157:H7 associated with this recall, can cause severe stomach cramps, bloody diarrhea and vomiting. Serious complications of the infection can include kidney failure. The infection usually results from eating contaminated food or drinking contaminated water, or being in contact with an infected person or animal.

Hanley is reminding Yukoners that freezing does not kill food pathogens and that consumers should always be conscious of safe food handling practices:

- Wash your hands after handling raw meat
- Keep your surfaces clean: wash cutting boards with warm soapy water
- Keep raw meat separate from produce and cooked meat Refrigerate or freeze food promptly after shopping, eating, or cooking
- Keep food hot in the oven or cold in the fridge. Beware of the temperature danger zone: between 4 and 60 degrees C (40 to 140F)
- Cook meat to a proper internal temperature using a digital thermometer
- Wash all your produce

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency maintains a list of the product codes and sales locations affected by the XL Foods recall.

There is also a list of questions and answers specific to the XL Foods recall.

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