

# Cantaloupes linked to Salmonella outbreak

*50 illnesses in Canada and the United States associated  
with Honduran cantaloupe grower*

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On March 22, 2008 the U.S. Food and Drug Administration advised consumers not to eat cantaloupes from a Honduran grower because they were contaminated with *Salmonella* Litchfield. The outbreak has so far caused over 50 illnesses in 16 states, and at least nine in Canada. Warnings and recalls related to cantaloupes are common, as they are always in the top 5 list of fruits and vegetables for outbreaks. This is largely due to their growing conditions and the potential to support the growth of bacteria.

As research has shown a potential for bacteria to be pushed into the meat of the cantaloupe during slicing, many authorities recommend washing the cantaloupe before cutting. However, due to the roughness of the rind, it is very difficult to wash away much of the bacteria. Using a scrub brush under running water (especially at the cut point) can reduce the risk of *Salmonella*.



## What you can do:



- Make sure you refrigerate cantaloupes as soon as they have been sliced up. Bacteria such as *Salmonella*, can grow nicely on the orange meat of the fruit at room temperature.
- If you wash the outside of the cantaloupe, vigorously use a scrub brush under running water to remove any easy-to-get to bacteria (and try not to splash the water all around the kitchen).
- Don't wash many cantaloupes at once by soaking in a sink. This could lead to *Salmonella* transfer from one fruit to another.