Washington State warns of refrigerated cookie dough products

Local News

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OLYMPIA - State health officials are warning Washington residents not to eat Nestle Toll House refrigerated cookie dough products. The products have been linked to at least 66 E. coli O157:H7 infections in 28 states, including five cases in Western Washington, a state Department of Health announcement said. Two of the five Washington cases were King County residents. Single cases were reported in Grays Harbor, Pierce, and Thurston counties. All occurred in May. Two of the five people infected in Washington were hospitalized. There have been no reported deaths. The department recommends that consumers check their refrigerators and freezers for any of the recalled products, which should be thrown away.

While thorough cooking will kill any E. coli bacteria that may be present, the raw products could contaminate consumersí hands or kitchen work surfaces, department officials said. "We want people to take this seriously" said Dave Gifford, who manages the departmentís food safety program. "If people have these products in their homes, they shouldnít eat them." Nestle USA's baking division has issued a voluntary recall of all Toll House refrigerated cookie dough products. They frequently are sold in plastic tubes, plastic tubs and large, rectangular bars. A complete list of recalled products is at The recall does not include any baked cookies, cookie dough-flavored ice creams or other Toll House brand products. Raw cookie dough sometimes contains harmful bacteria, so consumers should try to avoid the temptation to eat cookie dough before baking, according to the departmentís announcement. Consumers should wash their hands before and after working with raw cookie dough. The E. coli O157:H7 strain can cause illness, most commonly diarrhea. In extreme cases, it can cause hemolytic uremic syndrome, which can lead to kidney failure, especially in children. Washington's most recent case is from May 21.