

MEDIA RELEASE

Health Directorate Investigating Gastro Incident

ACT Health Directorate is currently investigating an outbreak of *Salmonella* gastroenteritis linked to a Canberra food business.

“Thirteen cases of salmonellosis have been linked to a Canberra business, which resulted in five people being hospitalised,” ACT Chief Health Officer, Dr Paul Kelly said today.

“*Salmonella* has been identified in mayonnaise containing raw egg, with further tests of food and environmental samples pending.

“All cases reported purchasing ready to eat food from the implicated business on Friday 25th or Saturday 26th November.”

“Food safety inspections of the implicated business have been conducted, with the premises being closed for cleaning and high risk foods being destroyed,” the Chief Health Officer said.

Salmonella gastroenteritis is an acute illness characterised by diarrhoea, abdominal pain, fever and vomiting, with symptoms typically lasting a week.

While the risk of new cases occurring has been reduced, Health Directorate expects further cases to be reported due to the delay in time between people being tested after their exposure.

“While most cases recover without specific treatment, some people may require hospitalisation, particularly for management of dehydration.

“*Salmonella* infections are most often spread via eating undercooked foods, through cross-contamination of foods or by person to person spread.

“The most effective method of preventing the illness is thorough cooking of food, safe food handling, storage and practicing good hand hygiene.

Between November and April each year there are typically around 100 cases of *Salmonella* infection reported to health authorities in the ACT.

“We urge persons with symptoms suggestive of *Salmonella* gastroenteritis to seek medical attention from their GP if they are concerned and not attend work or school while symptoms persist,” Chief Health Officer, Dr Paul Kelly concluded.

Statement Ends – 7 December, 2011

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