

# Cantaloupes at risk for Pathogens including *Salmonella*

*Cantaloupes have been linked to 16 outbreaks since 1990*

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Warnings and recalls related to cantaloupes are common resulting in special focus by health and food safety authorities. Risk is largely due to growing conditions, contaminated wash water and the potential for cantaloupe flesh to support the growth of bacteria.

Prevention of surface contamination is an important factor for producers to address and control as research has shown a potential for bacteria to be pushed into the meat of the cantaloupe during slicing.

Due to the roughness of the rind, it is very difficult to wash away much of the bacteria, suggesting that risk-reduction emphasis needs to be placed on the farm or in the packhouse.

As an example that outbreaks do happen, in March 2008 the FDA advised consumers not to eat cantaloupes from a Honduran grower because they were contaminated with *Salmonella* Litchfield. The outbreak caused over 50 illnesses in 16 states.



## What you can do:



Maintain potable water in dump tanks, sanitize and change water daily.

- Chlorinate wash water and monitor chlorine levels to maintain 100-150ppm.
- Maintain water pH at 6.0-7.0.
- Maintain tank water 10°F warmer than melon temperature.

Employee hygiene, including handwashing and proper facility use is an important step in risk reduction

- Provide soap, clean water and single use towels.

