

E. coli death toll up to at least 47

June 27 2011, By GEIR MOULSON , Associated Press

(AP) -- The death toll in Europe's E. coli outbreak has risen by three to at least 47, German authorities said Monday, even as new infections continue to tail off.

Germany's disease control center, the Robert Koch Institute, said 46 deaths have now been reported in the country.

One person has died in Sweden, and officials say one death in the U.S. may be linked to the outbreak - but it isn't yet confirmed that the Arizona man, who had visited Germany, was sickened by the same [bacterial strain](#).

The number of new infections has declined significantly over recent weeks but overall numbers are still rising, due largely to delays in notification.

The disease control center said 3,801 people have been reported sick in Germany. That includes 834 suffering from a complication that can lead to [kidney failure](#).

A further 119 cases have been reported in a total of 15 other countries. The source has been traced to a vegetable sprout farm in northern Germany.

Officials still don't know how the [sprouts](#) were contaminated, said Nina Bansbach, a spokeswoman for the German Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety.

The [World Health Organization](#) said it considers an E. coli outbreak in France in recent days as separate.

"Investigations are ongoing, but the first findings suggest that locally grown sprouts might be involved," the WHO said in a statement Monday of the outbreak. It said that, of eight French cases so far, three of them carried the same bacteria strains as in Germany.

"Intensive traceback is under way to identify a possible common source of the German and French sprout seeds," it added. But "other potential vehicles are also under investigation."

France has halted the sale of fenugreek, mustard and arugula sprout seeds from British mail order seed and plant company Thompson & Morgan. The company says the link is unsubstantiated.

There was "no direct supply relationship" between the farm in Germany at the center of the outbreak and the British company, German spokeswoman Bansbach said.

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