

## E. coli outbreak may be traced to Egypt seeds

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(AP) -- European food and disease prevention authorities said Wednesday they are investigating whether the E. coli outbreak in Germany and France may be traced back to fenugreek seeds imported from Egypt either in 2009 or last year.

The European Center for [Disease Prevention](#) and Control and the European Food Safety Authority said in a joint report that "there is still much uncertainty about whether this is truly the common cause of all the infections."

The report said "fenugreek seeds imported from Egypt either in 2009 and/or 2010 are implicated in both outbreaks." Fenugreek seeds are commonly used in the preparation of pickles and curry powders as well as Indian, Ethiopian and Yemeni cuisine.

However, further investigation was necessary, said the report.

The death toll in Europe's E. coli outbreak has risen by three to at least 47, according to German authorities. Germany's disease control center said earlier this week that 46 deaths have now been reported in the country. One person has died in Sweden.

In France, eight cases have been reported so far. Seven people have been hospitalized in the Bordeaux region and another person was released.

The report said that a 2009 lot of fenugreek seeds appeared to be implicated in the outbreak in France and a 2010 lot in the German

outbreak. But it said this possible link does not explain the case in Sweden, where no consumption of [sprouts](#) has been implicated.

Many questions were still unanswered about the source of the E. coli.

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.

The [World Health Organization](#) said it considers an outbreak in France separate. But it also said that, of the eight French cases, three of them carried the same [bacterial strains](#) as in Germany.

The report said the clinical picture of the French cases was similar to that of German cases.

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