



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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## **Hawai'i Department of Health to distribute food consumption survey by mail statewide**

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) is rolling out a statewide survey to learn more about food habits of Hawai'i residents and visitors, and find out if there are any behaviors associated with possible risks for foodborne illnesses, including angiostrongyliasis, commonly known as rat lungworm disease.

DOH has contracted Anthology Marketing Group in Honolulu to administer the survey. The survey team at Anthology Marketing Group will be responsible for collecting completed surveys and aggregating the data to maintain respondent confidentiality. All responses will be anonymous.

Starting today (Nov. 1), the official survey will be mailed at random to households across the state. Those who receive the paper-based survey will also be offered the option to submit responses online. Further instructions will be included in the hard-copy packets provided to recipients through the mail. This particular survey on food consumption will not use phone or email to contact residents.

The survey will include questions about what residents like to eat, where foods are purchased or grown, where water resources come from, and how foods are prepared. Data gathered will be used to inform best practices for food safety, guide public health intervention and prevention strategies, and enhance understanding of the risk for foodborne disease among Hawai'i residents and visitors.

The department is aiming to collect a total of 3,772 survey responses to gather a complete picture representative of households in the state. Those who receive a mailed survey are encouraged to complete it in full and return responses promptly in the included postage-paid envelope, based on the instructions provided.

"We strongly urge residents and visitors who receive this survey in the mail to promptly fill it out. The more data we have to understand the average food consumption habits of people in Hawai'i, the better equipped our team will be to respond quickly to identify implicated foods and respond faster to mitigate further spread of disease," said State Epidemiologist Dr. Sarah

Park. “Department of Health disease investigators work diligently to determine how people may have gotten sick, but one of the most difficult parts of an investigation is determining what individuals may have been exposed to that caused the infection. Data from this study will also be used to identify effective measures that can be taken to prevent any further infections from occurring.”

Data gathered will be used specifically to analyze potential risk behaviors related to rat lungworm disease, such as specific food-item consumption, exposure to rats, slugs and snails in the area surrounding a survey respondent’s home, food preparation habits, water sources, and eating habits outside the home.

Dr. Park added, “We know that most people get sick with angiostrongyliasis from eating infected slugs and snails, but we often have a hard time pinpointing exactly how they came to consume the infected mollusks. This survey will allow us to determine if certain behaviors or conditions may result in greater susceptibility than others to rat lungworm disease.”

If residents would like to confirm the validity of the survey received by mail, contact the Department of Health or Anthology Marketing Group using the phone numbers and/or email addresses provided in the instructions included in each survey packet. Participation in this survey is voluntary.

More information about rat lungworm disease and how to prevent it can be found online at the following websites:

- CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/angiostrongylus/>
- DOH website: [http://health.hawaii.gov/docd/disease\\_listing/rat-lungworm-angiostrongyliasis/](http://health.hawaii.gov/docd/disease_listing/rat-lungworm-angiostrongyliasis/)

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