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To: DeKalb County News Media

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Public Health Administrator

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
General Mills Issues Voluntary Recall of Flour Products

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The DeKalb County Health Department is advising that General Mills is collaborating with health officials to investigate an ongoing, multistate outbreak of *E. coli* O121 that may be potentially linked to Gold Medal flour, Wondra flour, and Signature Kitchens flour (sold in Safeway, Albertsons, Jewel, Shaws, Vons, United, Randalls, and Acme).

While there have been no reported illnesses in DeKalb County related to these products, authorities have been researching 38 occurrences of illnesses across 20 states related to a specific type of *E. coli* (*E. coli* O121), between December 21, 2015, and May 3, 2016. While attempting to track the cause of the illness, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that approximately half of the individuals reported making something homemade with flour at some point prior to becoming ill. Some reported using a General Mills brand of flour.

Out of an abundance of caution, a voluntary recall is being made. To date, *E. coli* O121 has not been found in any General Mills flour products or in the flour manufacturing facility and the company has not been contacted directly by any consumer reporting confirmed illnesses related to these products.

Based on the information that has been shared with General Mills, some of the ill consumers may have also consumed raw dough or batter. Consumers are reminded to not consume any raw products made with flour. Flour is an ingredient that comes from milling wheat, something grown outdoors that carries with it risks of bacteria which are rendered harmless by baking, frying or boiling. Consumers are reminded to wash their hands, work surfaces, and utensils thoroughly after contact with raw dough products or flour, and to never eat raw dough or batter.

Although most strains of *E. coli* are harmless, others can make you sick. *E. coli* O121 is a potentially deadly bacterium that can cause bloody diarrhea and dehydration. Seniors, the very young, and persons with compromised immune systems are the most susceptible to foodborne illness.

Any consumers concerned about an illness should contact a physician. Anyone diagnosed by a physician as having an illness related to *E. coli* O121 is also urged to contact state and local public health authorities. Consumers with additional questions or requesting a replacement should contact the company at 800-230-8103. Additional recall information can also be found at www.generalmills.com/flour

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