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NATIONAL ONION
ASSOCIATION

Dear Concerned Consumer,

Information has circulated online as email chain messages and across social media making claims that cut onions can cure the flu, are magnets for bacteria, and claiming cut onions are responsible for food poisoning. The claims come from multiple sources and are false.

The anecdote from the 1919 influenza epidemic claims cut onions placed around the house will fight off the flu virus. While people insist this folk belief works, no scientific evidence exists to back up the claims. Furthermore, cold and flu viruses are spread by contact, not by floating in the air where the onion can supposedly attract or destroy them.

An article written in 2008, claims onions and potatoes are responsible for more food poisoning than spoiled mayonnaise. Author Sarah McCann wrote the article under the pen name Zola Gorgon. She wrote the article following a tour of Mullins Food Products facility. The article was originally posted at McCann's website www.dinnerwithzola.com.

The claims made in the article about onions (and to a lesser extent, potatoes) are not substantiated. In fact, when cut, onions release compounds that do not promote pathogen growth. The Center for Food Safety at the University of Georgia states, juice released from cut onion is known to kill or inhibit the growth of several types of microorganisms, including some of those capable of causing food poisoning in humans.

When handled properly, cut onions can be stored in the refrigerator in a sealed container for up to 7 days.

Best Regards,

Kimberly J. Reddin

Kimberly Reddin

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