

Listeria Outbreak Linked to Packaged Salads Produced by Dole



Food Safety Alert

Posted December 22, 2021

CDC is currently investigating two separate *Listeria* outbreaks linked to packaged salads. This outbreak is linked to packaged salads produced by Dole. The [other outbreak](#) is linked to packaged salads produced by Fresh Express.

Fast Facts

- Illnesses: 16
- Hospitalizations: 12
- Deaths: 2
- [States](#): 13
- Recall: Yes
- Investigation status: Active

Recalled Food

Packaged salads produced by Dole

- Sold under multiple brands:
 - Ahold
 - Dole
 - Kroger
 - Lidl
 - Little Salad Bar
 - Marketside
 - Naturally Better
 - Nature's Promise
 - Simply Nature

- Products include mixed greens, garden salads, Caesar kits, and many other types of salads in bags or clamshells
- “Best if used by” dates from 11/30/21 through 01/08/22
- Product lot code begins with the letter “N” or “Y” in the upper right-hand corner of the package
- See Dole’s recall notice for the full list of recalled salads

Investigators found the outbreak strain of *Listeria* in two different packaged salads produced by Dole. Investigators are working to determine if additional products may be contaminated.

CDC is also investigating another *Listeria* outbreak linked to packaged salads produced by Fresh Express. See the Fresh Express recall notice.

What You Should Do

Do not eat any recalled packaged salads.

- Throw them away or return them to where you bought them.
- Follow these five steps to clean your refrigerator, items, and surfaces that may have touched the recalled products. *Listeria* can survive in the refrigerator and can easily spread to other foods and surfaces.

Call your healthcare provider right away if you have these symptoms after eating packaged salads.

- **Pregnant people** usually experience only fever, fatigue, and muscle aches. However, *Listeria* can cause pregnancy loss or premature birth. It can also cause serious illness or death in newborns.
- **People who are not pregnant** may experience headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance, and convulsions, in addition to fever and muscle aches.

Stay up to date on this outbreak by following CDC on Facebook or Twitter.

- Share the latest outbreak information with your friends and family who are at higher risk of getting sick from *Listeria* (aged 65 and older, are pregnant, or have a weakened immune system).

What Businesses Should Do

- Do not sell or serve recalled packaged salads.
- Follow FDA's safe handling and cleaning advice if you sold or served recalled packaged salads.

Symptoms of *Listeria*

- *Listeria* can cause severe illness (known as invasive listeriosis) when the bacteria spread beyond the gut to other parts of the body.
 - Adults 65 years and older, pregnant people, and people with weakened immune systems are at higher risk for severe illness.
- Symptoms of severe illness usually start 1 to 4 weeks after eating contaminated food. However, symptoms can start as late as 10 weeks after.
 - **Pregnant people** usually experience only fever, fatigue, and muscle aches. However, *Listeria* can cause pregnancy loss or premature birth. It can also cause serious illness or death in newborns.
 - **People who are not pregnant** may experience headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance, and convulsions, in addition to fever and muscle aches.
- *Listeria* can also cause common food poisoning symptoms, like diarrhea and fever. People who experience these symptoms usually recover without treatment.
- For more information about *Listeria*, see the [Listeria Questions and Answers page](#).

Investigation Details

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CDC, public health and regulatory officials in several states, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are collecting different types of data to investigate a multistate outbreak of *Listeria monocytogenes* infections.

CDC investigated this outbreak in 2019 and 2020 but was unable to gather enough data to identify the source in the past. CDC reopened the investigation in

November 2021 when four new illnesses were reported since the end of August 2021.

Epidemiologic and recent laboratory data show that packaged salads produced by Dole are contaminated with *Listeria* and making people sick.

Epidemiologic Data

As of December 17, 2021, 16 people infected with the outbreak strain of *Listeria monocytogenes* have been reported from 13 states. Illnesses started on dates ranging from August 16, 2014, to October 17, 2021.

Sick people range in age from 50 to 94 years, with a median age of 76, and 81% are female. Of 14 people with information available, 12 have been hospitalized. Two deaths have been reported from Michigan and Wisconsin.

The true number of sick people in an outbreak is likely higher than the number reported, and the outbreak may not be limited to the states with known illnesses. This is because some people recover without medical care and are not tested for *Listeria*. In addition, recent illnesses may not yet be reported as it usually takes 3 to 4 weeks to determine if a sick person is part of an outbreak.

State and local public health officials are interviewing people, or their family, about the foods they ate in the month before they got sick. Of the 8 people interviewed, 7 (88%) reported eating packaged salads. Of the three people who remembered a specific brand, two reported Dole and one reported Little Salad Bar.

Laboratory Data

Public health investigators are using the PulseNet system to identify illnesses that may be part of this outbreak. CDC PulseNet manages a national database of DNA fingerprints of bacteria that cause foodborne illnesses. DNA fingerprinting is performed on bacteria using a method called whole genome sequencing (WGS).

WGS showed that bacteria from sick people's samples are closely related genetically. This suggests that people in this outbreak got sick from the same food.

In October 2021, the Georgia Department of Agriculture identified the outbreak strain of *Listeria* in a Dole brand garden salad as part of a routine sampling

program of food at grocery stores. As a result, Dole recalled some of their garden salad products that are now past their "best if used by" dates. This sampling was not part of this outbreak investigation, but WGS later showed that the *Listeria* bacteria in the garden salad were closely related to the outbreak strain.

After CDC reopened this outbreak investigation, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development collected samples of packaged salads from retail stores for testing and identified the outbreak strain of *Listeria* in a Marketside brand package of shredded iceberg that was produced by Dole.

Public Health Actions

On December 22, 2021, Dole recalled all Dole-branded and private label packaged salads processed at the two facilities that produced the contaminated packaged salads.

Do not to eat, sell, or serve any recalled products. Investigators are working to determine if additional products may be contaminated.