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Public Health Notice - Outbreak of *Salmonella* infections related to sprouted chia seed powder

June 20, 2014

This public health notice has been updated to include 8 additional cases that have been added to the investigation. There are now 52 cases in four provinces (BC, AB, ON, QC) involved in this investigation and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency has [updated the food recall warning](#) to include additional information for chia seed products.

Why you should take note

The Public Health Agency of Canada is collaborating with provincial public health partners, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, and Health Canada to investigate 52 Canadian cases of *Salmonella* infection linked to the consumption of sprouted chia seed powder. Sprouted chia seed powder is made from ground, dried sprouted chia seeds.

As a part of this investigation, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency has issued [food recall warnings](#) for various products containing chia seeds and sprouted chia seed powder under the brands Organic Traditions, Back 2 the Garden, Intuitive Path SuperFoods, Harmonic Arts Botanical Dispensary, Naturally Organic, Pete's Gluten Free, Noorish Superfoods, MadeGood, and Dietary Express. These products have been recalled and are being removed from the marketplace due to possible *Salmonella* contamination.

The risk to Canadians is low, but those who have bought the [recalled products](#) sold under the recalled brands should not consume these products and should consult their health professional if they suspect they have symptoms of a *Salmonella* infection.

Ongoing Investigation

In Canada, four strains of *Salmonella* causing illness have been associated with this outbreak: *Salmonella* Newport and *Salmonella* Hartford, *Salmonella* Oranienburg, and *Salmonella* Saintpaul. In total, 52 cases have been reported in British Columbia (13), Alberta (10), Ontario (26) and Quebec (3). Six cases have been hospitalized; five cases have been discharged and have recovered or are recovering. The status of one case was not provided to the Agency. No deaths have been reported. The investigation is ongoing but currently, 37 of 39 cases that have been interviewed have reported consumption of chia seeds or sprouted chia seed powder. More information on the [epidemiological investigation](#) is also available.

The [United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are also investigating similar cases of *Salmonella*, and have [recalled sprouted chia seed powder products](#) linked to their investigation.

The Agency routinely investigates multi-provincial gastro-intestinal illness outbreaks, in an effort to determine if illnesses are linked to the same source.

The Agency will update Canadians when new information becomes available.

Who is most at risk?

Anyone can become sick from salmonellosis, but infants, children, seniors and those with weakened immune systems are at higher risk of serious illness because their immune systems are less robust.

Most people who become ill from salmonellosis will recover fully after a few days.

It is possible for some people to be infected with the bacteria and not get sick or show any symptoms, but still be able to spread the infection to others.

What you should do

These products have a long shelf life and may still be in people's home. If you have these brands of dried sprouted chia seed powder products in your home, do not eat them. Recalled products should be thrown out or returned to the store where they were purchased. If you are unsure about the source of your sprouted chia seed product, do not consume it. Secure it in a plastic bag and throw it out. Then wash your hands thoroughly in warm soapy water.

Food contaminated with *Salmonella* may not look or smell spoiled but can still make you sick.

If you suspect you became ill from eating a [recalled product](#) , or another sprouted chia seed product, talk to your health care provider.

Symptoms

Symptoms of a *Salmonella* infection, called salmonellosis, typically start 6 to 72 hours after exposure to a contaminated product. Symptoms include:

- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Abdominal cramps
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Chills
- Headache

These symptoms usually last four to seven days. In healthy people, salmonellosis often clears up without treatment. People who experience severe symptoms, or who have underlying medical conditions, should contact their health care providers if they suspect they have a *Salmonella* infection.

What the Public Health Agency of Canada is doing

The Public Health Agency of Canada is in regular contact with its federal and provincial partners in health, and the CDC as part of this investigation. The Agency will work with its partners and take appropriate action to protect Canadians if this event should escalate and pose an increased risk to the health of Canadians.

Additional information

- [Salmonella Fact Sheet](#)
- [Canadian Food Inspection Agency's Investigation into Salmonella in Chia Seeds](#) 
- More information about *Salmonella* is available through the Government of Canada [food safety web portal](#) 

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Epidemiological information: Salmonella illness related to chia seed powder

June 20, 2014

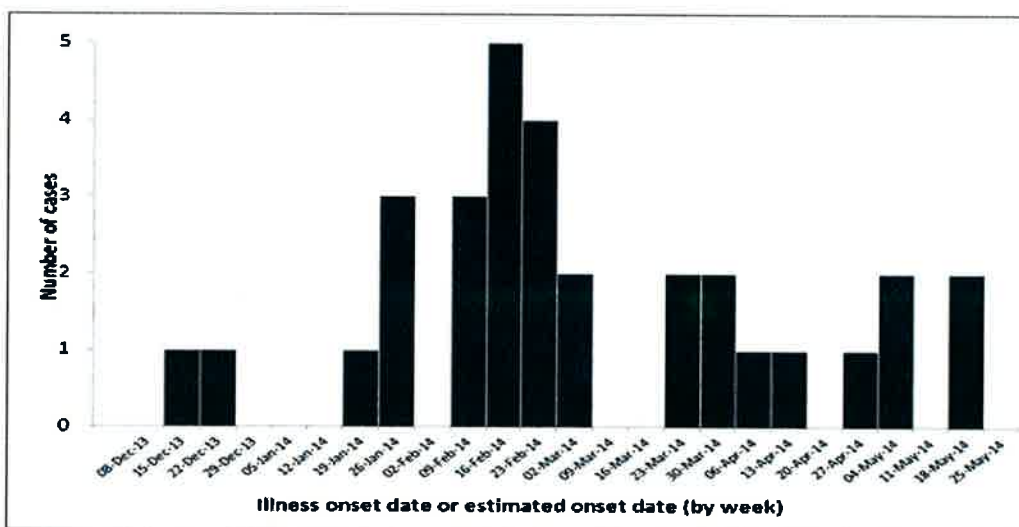
What is epidemiology?

Epidemiology is the study of disease in a population. Epidemiologists, or "disease detectives," use surveillance systems to identify those who are sick and confirm that the sick people are part of this event. They then gather information from the people who got sick and review the clues from all parts of the investigation that might reveal the cause of the illness event.

The figure below forms part of the epidemiological investigation into this outbreak. An "epi curve" ([Figure 1](#)) is a valuable reference tool in any epidemiological investigation. An epi curve shows when cases begin, when they peak, and when they trail off. Certain details of the people who got sick ([Table 1](#)) also help epidemiologists as they work to solve the questions involved in foodborne illness.

For more information on specific cases please contact the appropriate provincial health authority.

Figure 1. Number of people infected with the outbreak strain of *S. Newport*, *S. Hartford*, *S. Oranienburg* or *S. Saintpaul*



[Text equivalent for figure 1](#)

Table 1: At a Glance

Outbreak status	Ongoing
Case count	52
Provinces/Territories	4
Hospitalizations	6
Deaths	0
Gender (m:f)*	15:37
Age range in years	0-89
Recall	YES

*Information available for 52 of 52 cases

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