

Outbreak of *Salmonella* Infections Linked to Chicken



Investigation Notice

Posted August 29, 2018 at 11:30 AM ET

CDC, public health and regulatory officials in several states, the [U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service \(USDA-FSIS\)](#) are investigating a multistate outbreak of *Salmonella* infections linked to kosher chicken.

Latest Outbreak Information

At A Glance

- [Reported Cases](#): 17
- [States](#): 4
- Hospitalizations: 8
- Deaths: 1

- Seventeen people infected with the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* I 4,[5],12:i:- have been reported from four states.
 - Eight people have been hospitalized, including one death reported from New York.
- [Epidemiologic and traceback evidence](#) indicates that some kosher chicken products are contaminated with *Salmonella* I 4,[5],12:i:- and have made people sick.
- In interviews, ill people reported eating kosher chicken, and when asked about the specific brand eaten, several people reported Empire Kosher brand.
- The outbreak strain was also identified in samples of raw chicken collected from two facilities, including one facility that processes Empire Kosher brand chicken.

Advice to Consumers and Retailers

Always handle raw chicken carefully and cook it thoroughly to prevent food poisoning. This outbreak is a reminder that raw chicken products can have germs that spread around food preparation areas and can make you sick.

CDC is not advising that people avoid eating kosher chicken or Empire Kosher brand chicken.

CDC advises consumers to follow these steps to help prevent *Salmonella* infection from raw chicken:

- **Wash hands before and after preparing raw chicken.**
- **Don't spread germs from raw chicken around food preparation areas.** [Washing raw poultry before cooking is not recommended](#). Germs in raw poultry juices can spread to other areas and foods. Thoroughly wash hands, counters, cutting boards, and utensils with warm, soapy water after they touch raw chicken. Use a separate cutting board for raw chicken and other raw meats if possible.
- **Cook raw chicken thoroughly to kill harmful germs.** Chicken breasts, whole chickens, and ground chicken should always be cooked to an internal temperature of 165°F to kill harmful germs. Leftovers should be reheated to 165°F. [Use a food thermometer to check, and place it in the thickest part of the food](#).

Symptoms of *Salmonella* Infection

- Most people infected with *Salmonella* develop diarrhea, fever, and stomach cramps 12 to 72 hours after being exposed to the bacteria.
- The illness usually lasts 4 to 7 days, and most people recover without treatment.
- In some people, the diarrhea may be so severe that the patient needs to be hospitalized. *Salmonella* infection may spread from the intestines to the bloodstream and then to other places in the body.
- In rare cases, *Salmonella* infection can cause death unless the person is treated promptly with antibiotics.
- Children younger than 5 years of age, adults older than 65 years of age, and people with weakened immune systems are more likely to have severe illness.
- For more information, see the CDC [Salmonella](#) website.

Investigation Details

August 29, 2018

CDC, public health and regulatory officials in several states, and the [U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety Inspection Service \(USDA-FSIS\)](#) are investigating a multistate outbreak of *Salmonella* I 4,[5],12:i:- infections linked to kosher chicken.

Public health investigators are using the [PulseNet](#) system to identify illnesses that may be part of this outbreak. PulseNet is the national subtyping network of public health and food regulatory agency laboratories coordinated by CDC. DNA fingerprinting is performed on *Salmonella* bacteria isolated from ill people by using techniques called [pulsed-field gel electrophoresis](#) (PFGE) and [whole genome sequencing](#) (WGS). CDC PulseNet manages a national database of these DNA fingerprints to identify possible outbreaks. WGS gives a more detailed DNA fingerprint than PFGE. WGS performed on *Salmonella* from ill people in this outbreak showed that they are closely related genetically. This means that the ill people are more likely to share a common source of infection.

As of August 27, 2018, 17 people infected with the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* I 4,[5],12:i:- have been reported from four states. A list of the states and the number of cases in each can be found on the [Map of Reported Cases page](#).

Illnesses started on dates from [September 25, 2017, to June 4, 2018](#). Ill people range in age from less than one year to 76, with a median age of 14. Fifty-three percent are female. Of 16 people with information available, 8 (50%) have been hospitalized, including a death reported from New York. Illnesses may continue to be reported due to the time it takes between when a person becomes ill and when the illness is reported. Please see the [Timeline for Reporting Cases of Salmonella Infection](#) for more details.

Investigation of the Outbreak

In interviews, ill people answered [questions about the foods they ate and other exposures](#) in the week before they became ill. Of 14 people interviewed, all (100%) reported eating chicken products. Of nine people who reported brand information, seven reported specifically eating Empire Kosher brand chicken.

The outbreak strain of *Salmonella* I 4,[5],12:i:- has been identified in samples from raw chicken collected at two facilities, including one that processes Empire Kosher brand chicken. The samples collected by USDA-FSIS at the slaughter and processing establishments were part of USDA-FSIS' routine testing under the *Salmonella* performance standards. WGS showed that

the *Salmonella* strain from these samples is closely related genetically to the *Salmonella* strain from ill people.

Available data indicate that some kosher chicken products are contaminated with this strain of *Salmonella* I 4,[5],12:i:- and have made people sick. Consumers should be aware that any raw chicken may be contaminated with germs and should always [follow steps](#) to prevent *Salmonella* infection from these products.