

Listeria Outbreak Linked to Brie and Camembert Cheese



Food Safety Alert

Posted September 30, 2022

Fast Facts

- Illnesses: 6
- Hospitalizations: 5
- Deaths: 0
- [States](#): 6
- Recall: Yes
- Investigation status: Active



Recalled Food

Brie and camembert cheese made by Old Europe Cheese, Inc.

- Sold under multiple brand names
 - Black Bear
 - Block & Barrel
 - Charmant
 - Cobblestone
 - Culinary Tour
 - Fredericks

- Fresh Thyme
 - Glenview Farms
 - Good & Gather
 - Heinen's
 - Joan of Arc
 - La Bonne Vie
 - Lidl
 - Life in Provence
 - Market 32
 - Matie'd
 - Metropolitan
 - Prestige
 - Primo Taglio
 - Red Apple Cheese
 - Reny Picot
 - St. Randeaux
 - St. Rocco
 - Taste of Inspiration
 - Trader Joe
- Sold at stores nationwide in the US and Mexico
 - Albertsons
 - Giant Foods
 - Lidl
 - Stop & Shop
 - Whole Foods
 - And many more
 - Best-by dates from September 28, 2022, to December 14, 2022
 - See recall notice for a full list of product names, UPC codes, and stores

Investigators are working to determine if additional products may be contaminated.

What You Should Do

Do not eat recalled cheese. Throw it away.

- [Clean](#) your refrigerator, containers, and surfaces that may have touched the recalled cheese. *Listeria* can survive in the refrigerator and can easily spread to other foods and surfaces.

Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any symptoms of severe *Listeria* illness after eating recalled cheese:

- **People who are not pregnant** may experience headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance, and convulsions, in addition to fever and muscle aches.
- **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.

What Businesses Should Do

Do not sell or serve recalled cheese.

- [Clean and disinfect](#) any items and surfaces that may have touched recalled cheese, including anything used to cut or display cheese.

About *Listeria*

- *Listeria* can cause severe illness (known as invasive listeriosis) when the bacteria spread beyond the gut to other parts of the body.
 - Almost all severe illnesses result in hospitalizations and sometimes death.
- Symptoms of severe illness usually start within 2 weeks after eating food contaminated with *Listeria*, but may start as early as the same day or as late as 10 weeks after.
 - **People who are not pregnant** may experience headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance, and convulsions, in addition to fever and muscle aches.
 - **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.
- Pregnant people and their newborns, adults 65 years or older, and people with weakened immune systems are at higher risk for severe illness.

- Other people can be infected with *Listeria*, but they usually get mild food poisoning symptoms, like diarrhea and fever, and usually recover without treatment.

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.

Epidemiologic, traceback, and laboratory data show that cheese made by Old Europe Cheese, Inc. may be contaminated with *Listeria* and may be making people sick.

Epidemiologic and Traceback Data

As of September 28, 2022, six people infected with the outbreak strain of *Listeria* have been reported from six states. Sick people's samples were collected from August 6, 2017, to August 5, 2022.

Sick people range in age from 56 to 83 years, with a median age of 78, and 67% are female. Five people have been hospitalized, and no deaths have been reported.

The true number of sick people in this 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 about the foods they ate in the month before they got sick. Of the five people interviewed, four (80%) reported eating brie or camembert cheese. Most people did not remember the brand of the cheese they ate, but one person reported eating Lidl Premium Brand Brie. Old Europe Cheese is the only manufacturer of Lidl Premium Brand Brie.

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.

FDA, with assistance from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, inspected the Old Europe Cheese facility in Michigan and collected samples for testing. WGS showed that the *Listeria* found in the cooling room is closely related genetically to *Listeria* from sick people's samples. This provides more evidence that people likely got sick from eating cheese made by Old Europe Cheese.

Public Health Actions

On September 30, 2022, Old Europe Cheese, Inc, recalled their brie and camembert cheese. The company has also temporarily stopped producing these cheeses.

CDC is advising people not to eat, sell, or serve recalled cheese.