

Listeria Outbreak with Unknown Food Source



Investigation Notice

Posted April 21, 2023

A specific food item has not yet been identified as the source of this outbreak. However, CDC is concerned that illnesses continue to be reported. *Listeria* illness is rare, but it can result in serious illness or death.

***Listeria* is especially harmful if you are pregnant, aged 65 or older, or have a weakened immune system. If you are in any of these groups and have *Listeria* symptoms, contact your healthcare provider right away.**

Fast Facts

- Illnesses: 18 (7 new)
- Hospitalizations: 17 (7 new)
- Deaths: 0
- [States](#): 15 (5 new)
- Recall: No
- Investigation status: Active (first posted on February 15, 2023)

Source of the Outbreak

A specific food item has not yet been identified as the source of this outbreak.

Public health officials are interviewing people in this outbreak to find out what foods they ate before getting sick. Investigators are [collecting as much information](#) as they can to solve this outbreak.

What People at Higher Risk Should Do

Listeria is especially harmful if you are pregnant, aged 65 or older, or have a weakened immune system due to certain medical conditions or treatments. Other people can be infected with *Listeria*, but they rarely become seriously ill.

If you are pregnant, aged 65 or older, or have a weakened immune system:

- **Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of these symptoms:**
 - **People who are not pregnant** usually have fever, muscle aches, and tiredness. They may also get a headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance, or seizures.
 - **Pregnant people** usually have fever, muscle aches, and tiredness. However, *Listeria* can cause pregnancy loss or premature birth. It can also cause serious illness or death in newborns.
- **Provide information to [help us identify the contaminated food](#)**
 - If you are sick with *Listeria*, local or state health officials may contact you to find out what you ate in the month before you got sick. They may also ask for copies of receipts, your shopper card number, or leftover food for testing.
- **Take steps to prevent getting sick from *Listeria***
 - Follow CDC on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), or [Twitter](#) for updates about this outbreak.
 - Learn which foods are more likely to contain *Listeria* and ways to [prevent getting *Listeria*](#).
 - Stay up-to-date on [food recalls and outbreaks](#).

What Healthcare Providers Should Do

- Report listeriosis cases to your local health department.
- For more information about clinical features of listeriosis and patient management, see [Listeria Information for Health Professionals and Laboratories](#).

Listeria Symptoms

- *Listeria* is especially harmful to people who are pregnant, aged 65 or older, or with weakened immune systems. This is because *Listeria* is more likely to spread beyond their gut to other parts of their body, resulting in a severe condition known as invasive listeriosis.
 - **For people who are pregnant**, *Listeria* can cause pregnancy loss, premature birth, or a life-threatening infection in their newborn.

- **For people who are 65 years or older** or **who have a weakened immune system**, *Listeria* often results in hospitalization and sometimes death.
- Symptoms 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.
 - **Pregnant people** usually have fever, muscle aches, and tiredness.
 - **People who are not pregnant** usually have fever, muscle aches, and tiredness. They may also get a headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance, or seizures.

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.

A specific food item has not yet been identified as the source of this outbreak.

Epidemiologic Data

As of April 20, 2023, a total of 18 people infected with the outbreak strain of *Listeria* have been reported from 15 states. Sick people's samples were collected from July 3, 2018, to March 31, 2023.

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.

Public health officials collect many different types of information from sick people, including their age, sex, other demographics, and the foods they ate in the month before they got sick. This information provides clues to help investigators identify the source of the outbreak.

Sick people range in age from less than 1 to 96 years, with a median age of 73, and 61% are female. Race or ethnicity information is available for 18 sick people. Two sick people reported Hispanic ethnicity. Of 16 people that did not report Hispanic ethnicity, 15 are White and one is African American/Black. Of 18 people with information available, 17 have been hospitalized. There is one pregnancy-associated illness in a newborn.

State and local public health officials are interviewing people to find out what foods they ate in the month before they got sick.