

Outbreak of *Salmonella* Infections Linked to Pre-Cut Melons

Final Update



Food Safety Alert

May 24, 2019 at 1:45 PM ET

This outbreak appears to be over. CDC recommends that consumers, restaurants, and retailers choose and handle fruit safely to help prevent foodborne illness. Wash hands and food preparation surfaces before and after handling fruit. Refrigerate pre-cut fruit at 40°F or colder.

CDC, public health and regulatory officials in several states, and the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) investigated a multistate outbreak of *Salmonella* Carrau infections linked to pre-cut melons supplied by Caito Foods LLC.

Advice to Consumers, Restaurants, and Retailers



At A Glance

- [Reported Cases](#): 137
- [States](#): 10
- Hospitalizations: 38
- Deaths: 0
- Recall: Yes

CDC recommends that consumers, restaurants, and retailers always choose and handle fruit safely to help prevent foodborne illness.

- Throw away fruits and vegetables that are spoiled or have been recalled.
- Wash and sanitize countertops and drawers or shelves in [refrigerators](#) where recalled items were stored.
- If buying pre-cut and packaged fruits or vegetables, choose ones that are refrigerated or kept on ice and keep them refrigerated at home.
- [Wash your hands](#), kitchen utensils, and food preparation surfaces, including cutting boards and countertops, before and after handling fruits and vegetables.
- Keep fruits and vegetables separate from other foods that could contaminate them, such as raw meat and seafood.
- Refrigerate fruits and vegetables that you have cut up, peeled, or cooked within 2 hours. Refrigerate within 1 hour if the temperature outside is above 90°F. Chill them at 40°F or below in a clean container.

Contact a healthcare provider if you have:

- High fever (temperature over 102°F)
- Diarrhea for more than 3 days that is not improving
- Bloody stools
- Prolonged vomiting that prevents you from keeping liquids down
- Signs of dehydration, such as:
 - Making very little urine
 - Dry mouth and throat
 - Dizziness when standing up

Retailers and restaurants should always [choose and handle fruit safely](#) to help prevent foodborne illness.

- Restaurants and retailers should not serve or sell recalled pre-cut melon.
 - Wash and sanitize any containers where recalled pre-cut melon were held or sold. Use a solution of chlorine bleach and hot water or another appropriate sanitizer, following the instructions provided on the label.
 - [Wash your hands](#), kitchen utensils, and food preparation surfaces, including cutting boards and countertops, before and after handling fruits and vegetables.
 - Keep pre-cut fruits and vegetables refrigerated at 40°F or colder or on ice.
- Final Outbreak Information

- As of May 24, 2019, this outbreak appears to be over.
- A total of 137 people infected with the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Carrau were reported from 10 states.
 - Illnesses started on dates ranging from March 3, 2019, to May 1, 2019.
 - 38 people were hospitalized. No deaths were reported.
- [Epidemiologic and traceback evidence](#) indicated that pre-cut melons supplied by Caito Foods LLC was the likely source of this outbreak.
- On April 12, 2019, Caito Foods LLC recalled pre-cut watermelon, honeydew melon, cantaloupe, and pre-cut fruit medley products containing one of these melons produced at the Caito Foods LLC facility in Indianapolis, Ind.

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 illness 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.
- Children younger than 5 years, adults 65 years and older, and people with weakened immune systems are more likely to have a severe illness.

Investigation Details

May 24, 2019

CDC, public health and regulatory officials in several states, and the US Food and Drug Administration investigated a multistate outbreak of *Salmonella* Carrau infections.

Public health investigators used the [PulseNet](#) system to identify illnesses that may have been 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 showed that isolates from ill people were closely related genetically. This means that ill people in this outbreak were more likely to share a common source of infection.

As of May 24, 2019, 137 people infected with the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Carrau were reported from 10 states.

Illnesses started on dates ranging from [March 3, 2019, to May 1, 2019](#). Ill people ranged in age from less than one to 98 years, with a median age of 53. Among ill people, 63% were female. Of 104 people with information available, 38 (37%) were hospitalized. No deaths were reported.

WGS analysis did not identify antibiotic resistance in 76 bacterial isolates from ill people. Testing of outbreak isolates using standard [antibiotic susceptibility testing](#) methods by CDC's [National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System \(NARMS\)](#) laboratory is currently underway.

Investigation of the Outbreak

[Epidemiologic and traceback evidence](#) indicated that pre-cut melon supplied by Caito Foods LLC of Indianapolis, Ind., was the likely source of this multistate outbreak.

In interviews, ill people [answered questions about the foods they ate and other exposures](#) in the week before they became ill. Fifty-three (64%) of 83 people interviewed reported eating pre-cut melons purchased at grocery stores, including pre-cut cantaloupe, watermelon, honeydew, or a fruit salad mix or fruit tray with melon. Five additional people reported eating pre-cut melon outside the home.

Information collected from stores where ill people shopped indicated that Caito Foods LLC supplied pre-cut melon to these stores. On April 12, 2019, Caito Foods, Inc. [recalled](#) external icon pre-cut watermelon, honeydew melon, cantaloupe, and pre-cut fruit medley products containing one of these melons produced at the Caito Foods LLC facility in Indianapolis, Ind.

As of May 24, 2019, this outbreak appears to be over.