

Outbreak of *Salmonella* Infections Linked to Frozen Raw Tuna

Final Update



Food Safety Alert

Posted May 22, 2019 at 11:00 AM ET

This outbreak appears to be over, but recalled frozen tuna may still be in freezers. People could get sick if restaurants and retailers who are unaware of the recall continue to serve and sell sushi made with recalled frozen tuna. Check the U.S. Food and Drug Administration website for the list of recalled products.

CDC, public health and regulatory officials in several states, and the US Food and Drug Administration investigated a multistate outbreak of *Salmonella* Newport infections linked to frozen, raw ground tuna supplied by Jensen Tuna and sourced from JK Fish of Vietnam.

Advice to Consumers, Restaurants, and Retailers

At A Glance

- [Reported Cases](#): 15
- [States](#): 8
- Hospitalizations: 2
- Deaths: 0
- Recall: Yes

Restaurants and retailers should not sell or serve recalled frozen, ground tuna from Jensen Tuna.

- On April 15, 2019, Jensen Tuna in Houma, La., voluntarily recalled frozen ground tuna imported from JK Fish of Vietnam.

- The recalled tuna was individually packaged in one-pound bags and sold in 20-pound boxes under lot numbers z266, z271, and z272.
- Jensen Tuna distributed product to distributors in Connecticut, Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, New York, North Dakota, and Washington. Recalled product might have been redistributed to additional states.
- Restaurants and retailers should contact the distributor if they don't know whether their frozen ground tuna is recalled. If in doubt, they should not sell or serve it.
- Consumers who order sushi made with raw tuna, including "spicy tuna," should ask the restaurant or grocery store if the tuna is from Jensen Tuna. If you are not sure if the tuna has been recalled, do not eat it.
- Contact your health care provider if you think you may have become ill from eating raw tuna sushi.
- In general, people who are at higher risk for serious foodborne illness should not eat any raw fish or raw shellfish. People at higher risk include children younger than 5 years, pregnant women, adults 65 years and older, and people with weakened immune systems.

Final Outbreak Information

- As of May 22, 2019, this outbreak appears to be over.
- Fifteen people infected with the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Newport were reported from eight states.
 - Illnesses started on dates ranging from January 8, 2019, to March 31, 2019.
 - Two people were hospitalized. No deaths were reported.
- Epidemiologic and traceback evidence indicated that frozen, raw ground tuna supplied by Jensen Tuna Inc. was the likely source of this outbreak.
- On April 15, 2019, Jensen Tuna recalled frozen, ground tuna products that may have been contaminated with *Salmonella* Newport.

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, pregnant women, adults 65 and older, and people with weakened immune systems are more likely to have a severe illness.

Investigation Details

May 22, 2019

CDC, public health and regulatory officials in several states, and the US Food and Drug Administration investigated a multistate outbreak of *Salmonella* Newport 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 performed on bacteria isolated from ill people showed that they 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 20, 2019, 15 people infected with the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Newport were reported from eight states.

Illnesses started on dates ranging from January 9, 2019 to March 31, 2019. Ill people ranged in age from 24 to 85 years, with a median age of 40. Fifty-

three percent were female. Of 11 people with available information, 2 (18%) were hospitalized. No deaths were reported.

WGS analysis did not identify antibiotic resistance in 11 bacterial isolates from ill people. Testing of three outbreak isolates using standard antibiotic susceptibility testing methods by CDC's National Antimicrobial Resistance System (NARMS) methods by CDC's laboratory confirmed these results.

Investigation of the Outbreak

Epidemiologic and traceback evidence indicated that frozen, raw ground tuna supplied by Jensen Tuna Inc. in Houma, La., was the likely source of this outbreak.

In interviews, ill people answered questions about the foods they ate and other exposures in the week before they became ill. Nine (75%) of 12 people interviewed reported eating sushi from a restaurant or grocery store. This proportion was significantly higher than results from a survey of healthy people in which 5% reported eating sushi, sashimi, or ceviche made with raw fish or shellfish in the week before they were interviewed. Of the nine people with information about their sushi exposure, all nine (100%) reported eating a sushi item containing raw tuna or raw "spicy tuna."

The FDA and regulatory officials in several states traced the source of the raw tuna used by restaurants where ill people ate sushi. The traceback evidence indicated that the restaurants used frozen ground tuna supplied by Jensen Tuna.

On April 15, 2019, Jensen Tuna voluntarily recalled frozen ground tuna products that may be contaminated with *Salmonella* Newport.

As of May 22, 2019, this outbreak appears to be over.