

Salmonella Reading outbreak associated with a private event

- **Cases:** 7
- **Hospitalizations:** 0
- **Deaths:** 0
- **Status:** Investigation is complete
- **Locations:** N/A
- **Meal dates:** April 20, 2019
- **Prior food safety inspections and current rating?**
 - N/A

Highlights

Updated July 12, 2019

Summary

Public Health investigated an outbreak of salmonellosis (caused by *Salmonella* bacteria) associated with a private event held on April 20, 2019. Multiple potluck items were brought by party attendees. Assorted smoked and barbecued meat was also provided, including pork (whole pigs cut into quarters), turkey legs, and lamb. Some of this meat was partially prepared in a private residence.

Laboratory testing indicates this outbreak strain closely matches a national outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Reading related to raw turkey products, which suggests turkey as the likely source of illnesses from this private event. The national outbreak investigation is final, but CDC continues to monitor for reports of ill people because this *Salmonella* strain is present in the turkey industry.

Because we were unable to gather details about all foods served and consumed at this event and because no product remained for testing, we cannot identify the exact food item that was responsible for the illnesses.

Illnesses

Since April 24th, 2019, seven people (two Snohomish County residents and five King County residents) reported becoming ill after consuming food and beverage from this private event. One of the ill people was hospitalized and has since recovered.

Public Health actions

Public Health investigators gathered information about the source and preparation of the pork, turkey, and lamb eaten at the event to identify potential problems with undercooking or cross contamination of foods. We also provided information about safe food handling practices and how to prevent the spread of this bacteria.

Public Health investigators also visited the food facility where the pork, turkey, and lamb were purchased. All meat products were held at correct temperatures in the facility. No processing of the meats occurred there (like cutting or cooking), which could increase the risk of contamination with *Salmonella* bacteria. Source details about the meat products were provided to Washington State Department of Agriculture for possible traceback.

Laboratory testing

Four of the seven people who got sick tested positive for *Salmonella* Reading with the same genetic fingerprint, suggesting that they have a common source of infection. The other three ill people had symptoms consistent with salmonellosis.

About Salmonellosis

Salmonellosis is a bacterial infection that is often spread through the fecal-oral route, through contaminated food (e.g., undercooked chicken and turkey) and water, or through contact with animals and their environments. Symptoms of salmonellosis include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, fever, chills, and abdominal cramping. Illness typically lasts several days and people can spread infection to others even after symptoms resolve.

Salmonella infections are more common in the summer months when warmer weather and unrefrigerated foods create ideal conditions for the bacteria to grow.

Ill persons with a suspected *Salmonella* infection should not work in food handling, patient care, or childcare while having vomiting or diarrhea.

Prevention

To prevent *Salmonella* infection:

- Wash hands with soap and water after going to the bathroom, changing diapers, touching animals, and before eating or preparing food.
- Cook all meats thoroughly, especially poultry. Use a food thermometer to ensure meat is cooked hot enough to kill harmful germs, including *Salmonella*.
- Wash cutting boards and counters used for meat or poultry preparation immediately after use to avoid cross contaminating other foods.
- Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly before eating. Peel when possible.
- Avoid unpasteurized milk and other unpasteurized products including soft cheeses, juices, and cider.
- Discourage having chicks, ducklings, turtles, reptiles, or rodents as pets for young children or people with compromised immune systems.

More information about *Salmonellosis and food safety*

- [*Salmonella facts*](#), Public Health — Seattle & King County
- [*Salmonella facts*](#), foodsafety.gov
- [*Four Steps to Food Safety*](#), CDC
- [*Food Safety for Special Events, Seasons, and Holidays*](#), CDC
- Last Updated July 12, 2019

