

Press Releases

02/16/2021

DPH Issues Warning on El Abuelito Queso Fresco Cheese

The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) is warning consumers, restaurants, and retailers in Connecticut not to eat, serve or sell El Abuelito Queso Fresco cheese due to laboratory findings that detected *Listeria monocytogenes* in samples collected from a Connecticut retail food store last week.

The samples were collected as part of an ongoing investigation



into a multi-state outbreak of listeriosis.

Testing is ongoing to determine the source of the outbreak. Currently, DPH is aware of one Connecticut case of illness reported after eating this brand. DPH advises consumers not to eat any El Abuelito Queso Fresco cheese until further notice. Immune-compromised individuals and others at high risk for infection, such as pregnant women, young children and the elderly, should avoid all Hispanic fresh and soft cheeses.

The product that tested positive for *Listeria* originates from El Abuelito, a cheese manufacturer in Paterson, New Jersey, and sold as a fresh 10-ounce item packaged in a plastic container with a sticker with a lot number of A027 and a date of February 26, 2021. *Listeria monocytogenes* is an organism which can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, pregnant women and others with weakened immune systems. Although healthy individuals may suffer only short-term symptoms such as high fever, severe headache, stiffness, nausea, abdominal pain and diarrhea, *Listeria* infection can cause miscarriages, stillbirths and fetal infection among pregnant women. Because this product may still be in consumer's refrigerators, DPH encourages consumers to check any queso fresco cheese they may have to determine if it is the same product found to be contaminated with *Listeria*. At this time, it is not known if other lot numbers of this product are contaminated; however, because of the seriousness of the disease, DPH advises consumers not to eat any El Abuelito Queso Fresco cheese until further notice. Again, immune-compromised individuals and others at high risk for infection such as pregnant women, young children, and the elderly should avoid all Hispanic fresh and soft cheeses.

Customers and food establishments who still have the product should not consume or serve it and should discard it immediately.

Restaurants and retailers that serve or sell Hispanic-style fresh and soft cheeses should follow [FDA's safe handling and cleaning advice](#).

Please visit the FDA website at www.fda.gov/food/outbreaks-foodborne-illness/outbreak-investigation-listeria-monocytogenes-hispanic-style-fresh-and-soft-cheeses-february-2021 for case counts and additional information.