

Salmonella Outbreak Linked to Jule's Cashew Brie



Food Safety Alert

Posted July 7, 2021

This outbreak is over.

Fast Facts

- Illnesses: 20
- Hospitalizations: 5
- Deaths: 0
- States: Florida, Maryland, California, Tennessee
- Recall: Yes
- Investigation status: Closed



What You Should Do

Always follow these four food safety steps to prevent getting sick from *Salmonella*:

- **Clean:** Wash your hands, utensils, and surfaces often.

- **Separate:** Keep food that won't be cooked separate from raw meat, poultry, and seafood.
- **Cook:** Use a food thermometer to make sure you have cooked your food to a temperature high enough to kill germs.
- **Chill:** Refrigerate perishable food (food that goes bad) within 2 hours. If the outside temperature is hotter than 90°F, refrigerate within 1 hour. Thaw food in the refrigerator, not on the counter.

Investigation Details

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In April 2021, CDC, public health and regulatory officials in several states, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) began collecting different types of data to investigate a multistate outbreak of *Salmonella* infections.

Epidemiologic, laboratory, and traceback data showed that Jule's cashew brie was contaminated with *Salmonella* and made people sick.

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Epidemiologic Data

This outbreak included people infected with one of four *Salmonella* serotypes: Chester, Duisburg, Typhimurium, and Urbana.

A total of 20 sick people were reported from four states (Florida, California, Tennessee and Maryland). Illnesses started on dates ranging from December 11, 2020, to May 9, 2021.

Sick people ranged in age from 1 to 72 years, with a median age of 26 years, and 65% were female. Five people were hospitalized, and no deaths were reported.

State and local public health officials interviewed people about the foods they ate in the week before they got sick, and 15 (79%) reported eating Jule's cashew brie – the only common product identified.

Laboratory and Traceback Data

Public health investigators used the PulseNet system to identify illnesses that were part of this outbreak. CDC PulseNet manages a national database of DNA fingerprints of bacteria that cause foodborne illnesses. DNA fingerprinting is performed on bacteria using a method called whole genome sequencing (WGS).

Officials from California and Tennessee collected samples of Jule's cashew brie for testing. WGS results showed that samples of Jule's truffle cashew brie collected in both states were contaminated with *Salmonella*. California officials found the outbreak strains of *Salmonella* Chester and Urbana in the brie, and Tennessee officials found the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Urbana.

FDA and California Department of Public Health inspectors conducted an inspection at Jule's Foods. FDA collected food and environmental samples from the facility and found the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Urbana in samples of raw cashews. These raw cashews were from the same lot of cashews used to make the recalled brie. Other strains of *Salmonella* were found in the food and environmental samples, but these strains were not linked to any illnesses.

WGS was also used to identify any predicted antibiotic resistance for bacteria from 17 sick people's samples and 29 food samples. Eight were predicted to be resistant to one or more of the following antibiotics: fosfomicin, sulfisoxazole, streptomycin, tetracycline, and trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole. Standard antibiotic susceptibility testing by CDC's National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System (NARMS) is currently underway. Most people with *Salmonella* illness recover without antibiotics. However, if antibiotics are needed, this resistance is unlikely to affect the choice of antibiotic to treat most people.

Public Health Actions

On April 22, 2021, Jule's Foods recalled all of their products, including their cashew brie.