

Salmonella Outbreak Linked to Ground Turkey



Food Safety Alert

Posted May 18, 2021

This outbreak is over. Always handle and cook ground turkey safely to help prevent foodborne illness.

Fast Facts

- Illnesses: 33
- Hospitalizations: 4
- Deaths: 0
- [States](#): 14
- Recall: No
- Investigation status: Closed
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What You Should Do

Always follow these four food safety steps:

- **Clean:**
 - Wash your hands with soap and water before and after handling raw turkey.
 - Wash cutting boards, utensils, dishes, and countertops that have touched raw turkey using hot soapy water or a dishwasher.
 - Do not wash raw turkey. Washing raw turkey can spread turkey juices and contaminate your sink, countertops, utensils, and other foods.
- **Separate:**
 - Use a separate cutting board for raw turkey.
 - Keep raw turkey separate from food that won't be cooked.
- **Cook:**
 - Use a food thermometer to make sure you have cooked or reheated the turkey to 165°F a temperature high enough to kill germs.
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- **Chill:**
 - Refrigerate leftovers at 40°F or below within 2 hours (within 1 hour if it is hotter than 90°F).
 - Thaw turkey in the refrigerator, not on the counter.

Investigation Details

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CDC, public health and regulatory officials in several states, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA-FSIS) collected different types of data to investigate a multistate outbreak of *Salmonella* Hadar infections.

Epidemiologic, laboratory, and traceback data showed that ground turkey made people sick.

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Epidemiologic Data

As of May 17, 2021, a total of 33 people infected with the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Hadar were reported from 14 states. Illnesses started on dates ranging from December 28, 2020, to April 22, 2021.

Sick people ranged in age from less than 1 to 92 years, with a median age of 49 years. Sixty-six percent of people were female. Of 22 people with information available, four were hospitalized. No deaths were reported.

State and local public health officials interviewed people about the foods they ate in the week before they got sick. Of the 13 people interviewed, eight (62%) reported eating ground turkey. This percentage was significantly higher than results from a 2018-2019 survey of healthy people in which 13% of respondents reported eating ground turkey in the week before they were interviewed. This suggested that people in this outbreak got sick from eating ground turkey.

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). WGS showed that bacteria from sick people's samples were closely related genetically. This means that people in this outbreak likely got sick from the same food.

USDA-FSIS collected an unopened package of ground turkey from a sick person's freezer for testing. Testing results showed that the ground turkey contained the outbreak strain of *Salmonella*. The traceback investigation found that the ground turkey purchased by the sick person was produced by Plainville Brands, LLC.

Not all illnesses were linked to ground turkey produced by Plainville Brands, LLC. Sick people reported buying many different brands of ground turkey from multiple stores, and USDA-FSIS's traceback investigation identified several turkey processing facilities. The outbreak strain was also identified in routine turkey samples, from multiple companies, collected by USDA-FSIS and state officials from 13 establishments.

WGS predicted that *Salmonella* bacteria from 33 people's samples and 19 turkey samples were resistant to one or both of the antibiotics streptomycin and tetracycline. Most people with *Salmonella* illness recover without antibiotics. However, if an antibiotic is needed for an infection related to this outbreak, this resistance likely will not affect the choice of antibiotic used to treat most people.

Public Health Actions

On April 10, USDA-FSIS issued a public health alert for approximately 211,406 pounds of raw ground turkey products produced by Plainville Brands, LLC. These products had the establishment number "P-244" inside the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) mark of inspection. They were made from December 18-29, 2020 and were sold nationwide. CDC and FSIS also shared information about this outbreak with members of the National Turkey Federation.