

Outbreak of *Salmonella* Newport Infections Linked to Onions

Updated September 1, 2020 at 4:00 PM ET

CDC, public health and regulatory officials in several states, Canada, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are investigating a multistate outbreak of *Salmonella* Newport infections linked to onions.

Recall and Advice to Consumers, Restaurants, and Retailers

At A Glance

- [Reported Cases](#): 1,012
- [States](#): 47
- Hospitalizations: 136
- Deaths: 0
- Recall: [Yes](#)



Do not eat, serve, or sell recalled onions supplied by Thomson International, Inc., or any foods made with recalled onions. Recalled onion types include red, white, yellow, and sweet yellow varieties.

Foods made with recalled onions, such as cheese dips and spreads, salsas, and chicken salads, have also been recalled. These foods were sold at multiple grocery store chains.

- **Check your home for onions and other foods** recalled by Thomson International, Inc. and several other companies, including Food Lion, Giant Eagle, Kroger, Publix, Ralph's, Trader Joe's, and Walmart.
 - If you can't tell where your onions are from, don't eat them or any food made with them. Throw them away.

- If you used recalled onions to make any other food, don't eat the food. Throw it away, even if some of it was eaten and no one got sick.
- **Wash and sanitize any surfaces** that may have come in contact with onions or their packaging, such as countertops, storage bins, refrigerator drawers, knives, and cutting boards.
- **When you order food from a restaurant or shop for food**, check to make sure they are not serving or selling any recalled onions, foods prepared with recalled onions, or any recalled foods such as salads, sandwiches, tacos, salsas, and dips.
 - If they don't know where their onions are from, don't buy the product or order the food.

Advice to Restaurants, Retailers, and Suppliers

- **Restaurants and retailers** should not serve or sell recalled onions or foods prepared with these onions.
 - Check the list of [recalled products](#).
 - If you don't know where your onions are from, don't serve or sell them.
 - [Clean and sanitize](#) all surfaces that onions have come in contact with, including cutting boards, countertops, slicers, utensils, and storage bins.
- **Suppliers, distributors, and others in the supply chain** should not ship or sell recalled onions supplied by Thomson International, Inc. or foods prepared with these onions.
 - Suppliers and distributors that repackage raw onions should clean and sanitize any surfaces and storage bins that may have come in contact with recalled onions.

Symptoms of *Salmonella* Infection

- Most people infected with *Salmonella* develop diarrhea, fever, and stomach cramps 6 hours to 6 days 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, adults 65 years and older, and people with weakened immune systems are more likely to have a severe illness.
- For more information, see [Symptoms of Salmonella Infection](#).

Take these steps if you have symptoms of a *Salmonella* infection:

- Talk to your healthcare provider.
- Write down what you ate in the week before you started to get sick.
- Report your illness to your local health department.

- The health department will likely call you for an interview to ask you about foods you ate in the week before you got sick.
- Assist public health investigators by answering their questions when they contact you.

Latest Outbreak Information

- Since the last update on August 18, 2020, an additional 143 ill people were added to this investigation.
- A total of 1,012 people infected with the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Newport have been reported from 47 states.
 - 136 hospitalizations have been reported. No deaths have been reported.
- [Epidemiologic and traceback](#) information showed that red onions are a likely source of this outbreak. Due to the way onions are grown and harvested, other onion types, such as white, yellow, or sweet yellow, are also likely to be contaminated.
- On August 19, 2020, Hello Fresh [recalled](#) onions received by customers from May 8 through July 31, 2020.
- This investigation is ongoing. CDC will provide more information as it becomes available.

Investigation Details

September 1, 2020

As of August 31, 2020, a total of 1,012 people infected with the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Newport have been reported from 47 states. A list of the states and the number of cases in each can be found on the [Map of Reported Cases](#) page.

Illnesses started on dates ranging from [June 19, 2020, to August 11, 2020](#). Ill people range in age from less than 1 to 102 years, with a median age of 40. Fifty-seven percent of ill people are female. Of 581 ill people with information available, 136 hospitalizations have been reported. No deaths have been reported.

Illnesses might not yet be reported due to the time it takes between when a person becomes ill and when the illness is reported. This takes an average of 2 to 4 weeks. Please see the [Timeline for Reporting Cases of *Salmonella* Infection](#) for more details.

Whole genome sequencing analysis of 732 bacterial isolates from ill people did not predict any antibiotic resistance in 730 isolates; one isolate had predicted resistance to ampicillin, and one isolate had predicted resistance to tetracycline. Standard [antibiotic susceptibility testing](#) of seven clinical isolates by CDC's [National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System \(NARMS\)](#) laboratory showed no resistance. This resistance does not affect the choice of antibiotic used to treat most people.

Whole genome sequencing analysis shows that an outbreak of *Salmonella* Newport infections in [Canada](#) is related genetically to this outbreak in the United States. This means that people in both of these outbreaks are likely to share a common source of infection.

Investigation of the Outbreak

[Epidemiologic and traceback](#) information indicates that red onions are a likely source of this outbreak. Due to the way onions are grown and harvested, other onion types, such as, white, yellow, or sweet yellow, are also likely to be contaminated.

In interviews, ill people answered [questions about the foods they ate and other exposures](#) in the week before they became ill. Ninety percent of people reported eating onions or foods likely containing onions in the week before their illness started. Of the 154 people who were asked what types of onions they ate, 103 (67%) ate red onions, 96 (62%) ate white onions, and 86 (56%) ate yellow onions. Most ill people reported eating more than one type of onion.

Many ill people were identified as part of illness clusters. An illness cluster is defined as two or more people who do not live in the same household who report eating at the same restaurant location, attending a common event, or shopping at the same location of a grocery store in the week before becoming ill. Investigating illness clusters can provide critical clues about the source of an outbreak. If several unrelated ill people ate or shopped at the same location of a restaurant or store within several days of each other, it suggests that the contaminated food item was served or sold there.

Thirty-four illness clusters have been identified in 13 states. Information was collected on 23 of the 34 clusters at restaurants and grocery stores. Information from these clusters shows that many ill people ate red onions and other types of onions. Investigations conducted by states and FDA determined that all 23 restaurants and grocery stores served or sold red, yellow, or white onions. Seventeen of the 23 (74%) served red onions, 13 (57%) served yellow onions, and 10 (43%) served white onions.

The traceback information collected from several of these illness clusters identified Thomson International, Inc., of Bakersfield, California, as a likely source of red onions. Due to the way onions are grown and harvested, other onion types, such as white, yellow, or sweet yellow, are also likely to be contaminated. Traceback is ongoing to determine if other onions are linked to the outbreak.

On August 1, 2020, Thomson International, Inc. voluntarily recalled red, yellow, white, and sweet yellow onions because they may be contaminated with *Salmonella*.

Other companies have also recalled onions or foods made with recalled onions.

Consumers, restaurants, and retailers should not eat, serve, or sell recalled onions supplied by Thomson International, Inc., or any foods made with recalled onions.

CDC will provide updates when more information is available.