

Listeria Outbreak Linked to Ice Cream



Food Safety Alert

Posted July 2, 2022

Fast Facts

- Illnesses: 23
- Hospitalizations: 22
- Deaths: 1
- [States](#): 10
- Recall: No
- Investigation status: Active

What Everyone Should Do

Consumers who have Big Olaf Creamery brand ice cream at home should throw away any remaining product. Big Olaf Creamery brand ice cream is only sold in Florida.

- Clean any areas, containers, and serving utensils that may have touched Big Olaf ice cream products.

What Businesses Should Do

Do not serve or sell any Big Olaf ice cream products.

- Big Olaf Creamery in Sarasota, FL, is voluntarily contacting retail locations to recommend against selling their ice cream products until further notice.
- Clean and disinfect any areas and equipment that may have touched Big Olaf ice cream products, including ice cream scoops and other serving utensils.

What People at Higher Risk Should Do

***Listeria* is most likely to sicken pregnant people and their newborns, adults aged 65 or older, and people with weakened immune systems. Other people can be infected with *Listeria*, but they rarely become seriously ill.**

Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of these *Listeria* symptoms:

- **Pregnant people** typically experience only fever, fatigue, and muscle aches. However, *Listeria* infections during pregnancy can lead to miscarriage, stillbirth, premature delivery, or life-threatening infection of the newborn.
- **People who are not pregnant** may experience headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance, and convulsions, in addition to fever and muscle aches.

About *Listeria*

- *Listeria* can cause severe illness (known as invasive listeriosis) when the bacteria spread beyond the gut to other parts of the body.
- Pregnant people, adults 65 years or older, and people with weakened immune systems are at higher risk for severe illness.
- Symptoms of severe illness usually start within 2 weeks after eating food contaminated with *Listeria*, but may start as early as the same day or as late as 70 days after.
- *Listeria* can also cause common food poisoning symptoms, like diarrhea and fever. People who experience these symptoms usually recover without treatment.

Investigation Details

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The Florida Department of Health, CDC, public health and regulatory officials in several other states, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are

collecting different types of data to investigate a multistate outbreak of *Listeria monocytogenes* infections.

As a result of this investigation, Big Olaf Creamery in Sarasota, FL, is voluntarily contacting retail locations to recommend against selling their ice cream products. Consumers who have Big Olaf Creamery brand ice cream at home should throw away any remaining product.

Epidemiologic Data

Public health officials continue to interview people about the foods they ate in the month before they got sick. Of the 17 people interviewed, 14 (82%) reported eating ice cream. Among 13 people who remembered details about the type of ice cream they ate, six reported eating Big Olaf Creamery brand ice cream or eating ice cream at locations that might have been supplied by Big Olaf Creamery.

Products identified in this alert are part of an ongoing investigation.

Public Health Actions

On July 1, 2022, Big Olaf Creamery in Sarasota, FL, voluntarily began contacting retail locations to recommend against selling their ice cream products. Consumers who have Big Olaf Creamery brand ice cream at home should throw away any remaining product.

Previous Updates

[June 30, 2022](#)

CDC, public health and regulatory officials in several states, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), are collecting different types of data to identify the food source of a multistate outbreak of *Listeria monocytogenes* infections. The investigation has not yet identified a food linked to illness.

Epidemiologic Data

As of June 29, 2022, a total of 23 people infected with the outbreak strain of *Listeria monocytogenes* have been reported from 10 states. Of the 22 people with information, 20 sick people reported living in or traveling to Florida in the month before they got sick, although the significance of this is still under investigation. Illnesses started on dates ranging from January 24, 2021, through June 12, 2022.

Sick people range in age from less than 1 to 92 years, with a median age of 72, and 52% are male. Twenty-two people (96%) have been hospitalized. Five people got sick during their pregnancy, and one illness resulted in a fetal loss. One death has been reported from Illinois.

The true number of sick people in an outbreak is likely higher than the number reported, and the outbreak may not be limited to the states with known illnesses. In addition, recent illnesses may not yet be reported as it usually takes [3 to 4 weeks](#) to determine if a sick person is part of an outbreak.

Public health officials are interviewing people about the foods they ate in the month before they got sick. So far, a common food item has not been identified.

Laboratory Data

Public health investigators are using the [PulseNet](#) system to identify illnesses that may be 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 are closely related genetically. This means that people in this outbreak likely got sick from the same food.

Public Health Actions

Until we learn more, CDC is advising people at [higher risk for severe *Listeria* illness](#) to contact their healthcare provider if they have any symptoms of a *Listeria* infection.

Healthcare providers should [report listeriosis illnesses](#) to their health department.