Listeria Outbreak Linked to Fully Cooked Chicken

Food Safety Alert

Posted September 10, 2021
This outbreak is over

Fast Facts

- Illnesses: 3
- Hospitalizations: 3
- Deaths: 1
- States: 2
- Recall: Yes
- Investigation status: Closed

Recalled Food

Frozen, fully cooked chicken products supplied by Tyson Foods Inc.

Additional products made with Tyson Foods Inc. chicken were also recalled.

- Products include chicken strips, pulled chicken, diced chicken, chicken wing sections, fully cooked pizza with chicken, chicken salad sandwiches, chicken wraps, and salads with chicken.
- Brands include Tyson, Jet's Pizza, Casey's General Store, Marco's Pizza, Little Caesars, and Circle K.
- See recall notices on USDA-FSIS and FDA websites for product names and labels.

These products were recalled in July 2021 and should no longer be available for sale. However, they can be kept frozen for a long time and may still be in your freezer.

What You Should Do

Check your freezer for recalled products. If you have any left:

- Do not eat the recalled products. Throw them away or return them to where you bought them.
- Follow these five steps to clean your refrigerator, containers, and surfaces that may have touched the recalled products. *Listeria* can survive in the refrigerator and can easily spread to other foods and surfaces.
- Call your healthcare provider right away if you have these symptoms after eating recalled products.
    - If you are pregnant: Fever and muscle aches. Your illness may be mild, but *Listeria* can cause pregnancy loss or premature birth. It can also cause serious illness or death in newborns.
    - If you are not pregnant: Headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance, and convulsions, in addition to fever and muscle aches.

Stay healthy and prevent *Listeria*:

- Find out if you are at higher risk for getting sick with *Listeria.*
- Learn which foods are more likely to contain *Listeria,* and take steps to prevent getting sick.
- Stay up to date on food recalls and outbreaks to avoid getting sick from eating contaminated food.

What Businesses Should Do

- Do not serve or sell recalled products.
- Follow USDA-FSIS guidance to prevent the spread and growth of *Listeria*.

Investigation Details

In July 2021, CDC, public health and regulatory officials in several states, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA-FSIS)

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

Epidemiologic, laboratory, and traceback data showed that frozen, fully cooked chicken products supplied by Tyson Foods Inc. made people sick.

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Epidemiologic Data

Three people infected with the outbreak strain of *Listeria monocytogenes* were reported from two states (Texas – 2 cases; Delaware – 1 case). Illnesses started on dates ranging from April 6, 2021, to June 5, 2021.

Sick people ranged in age from 60 to 95 years, with a median age of 89, and 66% were male. All three people were hospitalized, and one death was reported from Texas.

State and local public health officials interviewed people about the foods they ate in the month before they got sick. All three people were in a long-term care facility or hospital when they got sick. These facilities served many food items, including meals made with precooked chicken.

Laboratory 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 identical. This suggests that people in this outbreak got sick from the same food.

USDA-FSIS found the outbreak strain of *Listeria* in two samples of fully cooked chicken products during routine product testing.

Traceback Data

USDA-FSIS and state partners collected food purchase records from the long-term care facility and hospital to determine the source of the fully cooked chicken products served. USDA-FSIS also identified the two facilities that produced the fully cooked chicken products found to contain the outbreak strain during

routine testing. USDA-FSIS found that the Tyson facility in Dexter, Missouri, produced one of the products that tested positive for the outbreak strain, supplied product to another firm where a positive sample was collected, and distributed fully cooked chicken products to the long-term care facility and the hospital.

Public Health Actions

On July 3, 2021, Tyson Foods Inc. recalled approximately 8,955,296 pounds of ready-to-eat chicken products. Additional products made with Tyson Foods Inc. chicken were recalled on July 8 and July 13, 2021.