

Salmonella Outbreak Linked to Fish



Food Safety Alert

Posted October 20, 2022

Fast Facts

- Illnesses: 33
- Hospitalizations: 13
- Deaths: 0
- [States](#): 3
- Recall: No
- Investigation status: Active

Contaminated Food

Fish sold to restaurants by Mariscos Bahia, Inc.

- Salmon, tuna, Chilean sea bass, swordfish, and halibut distributed from Mariscos Bahia's locations in Pico Rivera, California, and Phoenix, Arizona.
- The fish was distributed to restaurants in California and Arizona fresh, not frozen.
- Fish sold by Mariscos Bahia, Inc., was **not** sold directly to consumers in grocery stores or markets.

What Businesses Should Do

Do not sell or serve fresh fish sold by Mariscos Bahia, Inc.

- Restaurants should check with their suppliers and not sell or serve salmon, tuna, Chilean sea bass, swordfish, or halibut received on or after June 14, 2022, fresh (not frozen) from Mariscos Bahia, Inc.
- If restaurants received this fish from Mariscos Bahia and froze it, they should not sell or serve it.
- Wash and sanitize items and surfaces that may have come in contact with this fish.

What You Should Do

- **In general, people who are at higher risk for serious foodborne illness should not eat any raw fish or raw shellfish.** People at higher risk include children younger than 5 years, pregnant people, adults 65 years and older, and people with weakened immune systems.
- **Call your healthcare provider** if you have any of these severe *Salmonella* symptoms:
 - Diarrhea and a fever higher than 102°F
 - Diarrhea for more than 3 days that is not improving
 - Bloody diarrhea
 - So much vomiting that you cannot keep liquids down
 - Signs of dehydration, such as:
 - Not peeing much
 - Dry mouth and throat
 - Feeling dizzy when standing up

Symptoms of *Salmonella*

- Most people infected with *Salmonella* experience diarrhea, fever, and stomach cramps.
 - Symptoms usually start 6 hours to 6 days after swallowing the bacteria.
 - Most people recover without treatment after 4 to 7 days.
- Some people—especially children younger than 5 years, adults 65 years and older, and people with weakened immune systems—may experience more severe illnesses that require medical treatment or hospitalization.

Investigation Details

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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 investigate a multistate outbreak of *Salmonella* Litchfield infections.

Epidemiologic, laboratory, and traceback data show that fresh fish sold to restaurants by Mariscos Bahia, Inc., may be contaminated with *Salmonella* and may be making people sick.

Epidemiologic and Traceback Data

As of October 19, 2022, a total of 33 people infected with the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Litchfield have been reported from 3 states. Illnesses started on dates ranging from June 14, 2022, to September 18, 2022.

Sick people range in age from 1 to 67 years, with a median age of 32, and 59% are female. Of 26 people with information available, 13 have been hospitalized. No deaths have been reported.

The true number of sick people in this outbreak is likely much higher than the number reported, and the outbreak may not be limited to the states with known illnesses. This is because many people recover without medical care and are not tested for *Salmonella*. 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.

State and local public health officials are interviewing people about the foods they ate in the week before they got sick. Of the 16 people interviewed, 12 (75%) reported eating raw fish, sushi, or poke. This percentage was significantly higher than the 7.9% of respondents who reported eating raw fish in the [FoodNet Population Survey](#)—a survey that helps estimate how often people eat various foods linked to diarrheal illness. This difference suggests that people in this outbreak got sick from eating raw fish. Of 11 people who remembered details of their meal, 9 (82%) reported raw salmon. Several sick people in the outbreak were identified as a part of three illness clusters at restaurants. An illness cluster is defined as two or more people who do not live in the same household who report eating food from the same retail location before getting sick. If several unrelated sick people ate food from the same retail location, it suggests that the contaminated food item was served or sold there. FDA's investigation traced the source of fresh, raw salmon eaten by sick people in these illness clusters back to Mariscos Bahia, Inc.

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

FDA collected an environmental sample that included multiple swabs at Mariscos Bahia, Inc., in Pico Rivera, California. *Salmonella* was identified from multiple environmental swabs collected at the facility and WGS analysis is ongoing. WGS completed to date indicates that *Salmonella* detected in at least one of the swabs from the facility is the outbreak strain.

WGS of bacteria from one person's sample predicted resistance to ciprofloxacin; analysis of bacteria from 32 samples did not predict resistance to any antibiotics. Most people with *Salmonella* illness recover without antibiotics. However, if antibiotics are needed, this resistance is unlikely to affect the choice of antibiotic used to treat most people. Standard [antibiotic susceptibility testing](#) by CDC's [National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System \(NARMS\)](#) laboratory is currently underway.

Public Health Actions

CDC is advising restaurants not to sell or serve salmon, tuna, Chilean sea bass, swordfish, or halibut received on or after June 14, 2022, from Mariscos Bahia, Inc. The fish was distributed to restaurants fresh, not frozen. Fish distributed from Mariscos Bahia's locations in Pico Rivera, California, and Phoenix, Arizona, are included.