

Salmonella Outbreak Linked to Alfalfa Sprouts



Food Safety Alert

Posted December 30, 2022

Fast Facts

- Illnesses: 15
- Hospitalizations: 2
- Deaths: 0
- [States](#): 3
- Recall: Yes
- Investigation status: Active



Recalled Food

SunSprout Enterprises raw alfalfa sprouts

- Sold to foodservice and at grocery stores between late November and mid December 2022

- Packaged in 4-ounce clear, plastic clamshell containers and 2.5 pound packages labeled with lot numbers 4211, 5211, 3212, or 4212
- Best-by dates between 12/10/2022 and 1/7/2023
- See [recall notice](#) for additional information

What You Should Do

- **Do not eat any recalled alfalfa sprouts.** Throw them away or return them to where you bought them.
- **Wash items and surfaces** that may have touched the recalled alfalfa sprouts using hot soapy water or a dishwasher.
- **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

What Businesses Should Do

- **Do not sell or serve recalled alfalfa sprouts.**
- **Wash and sanitize items and surfaces** that may have come in contact with recalled alfalfa sprouts.

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* Typhimurium infections.

Epidemiologic and traceback data show that alfalfa sprouts may be contaminated with *Salmonella* and may be making people sick.

Epidemiologic Data

As of December 29, 2022, a total of 15 people infected with the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* have been reported from three states. Illnesses started on dates ranging from December 2, 2022, to December 13, 2022.

Public health officials collect many different types of information from sick people, including their age, race, ethnicity, other demographics, and the foods they ate in the week before they got sick. This information provides clues to help investigators identify the source of the outbreak.

Sick people range in age from 19 to 78 years, with a median age of 39, and 67% are female. Of 14 people with information available, two have been hospitalized.

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 12 people interviewed, all (100%) reported eating alfalfa sprouts. This percentage was significantly higher than the 8.7% of respondents who reported eating sprouts 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 alfalfa sprouts.

Laboratory and Traceback 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.

[WGS analysis](#) of bacteria from 15 people's samples did not predict resistance to any antibiotics. Standard [antibiotic susceptibility testing](#) by CDC's [National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System \(NARMS\)](#) laboratory is currently underway.

FDA's preliminary traceback evidence indicates that the restaurants and grocery stores identified in this outbreak received alfalfa sprouts from SunSprout Enterprises. Additionally, two of the individuals identified in this outbreak confirmed they had purchased Sun Sprouts brand alfalfa sprouts from their local grocery store.

Public Health Actions

On December 29, 2022, SunSprout Enterprises [recalled](#) four lots of raw alfalfa sprouts, lot numbers 4211, 5211, 3212, and 4212. The sprouts were distributed to food service and grocery customers in Nebraska, Kansas, and Iowa between late November and mid December 2022. Recalled sprouts have best-by dates between 12/10/2022 and 1/7/2023.

CDC advises people to not eat, sell, or serve recalled raw alfalfa sprouts.