
Public Health Notice: Outbreak of Listeria infections linked to recalled plant-based refrigerated beverages

July 17, 2024: Original notice

This outbreak investigation is ongoing. The public health notice will be updated as the investigation evolves.

At a glance

Do not consume, use, sell, serve or distribute various recalled plant-based refrigerated beverages

At a glance

Illnesses	12
Provinces and territories with illnesses (number of illnesses)	- Ontario (10) - Quebec (1) - Nova Scotia (1)
Hospitalizations	9
Deaths	2
Gender	67% female
Age range	37-89 58% of cases are 60 years of age or older
Food Recall	Yes, various Silk and Great Value brand plant-based refrigerated beverages recalled nationally Recall information
Investigation status	Active

Recalled food

Food recall warnings have been issued for plant-based refrigerated beverages from:

- Silk
- Great Value

For more information on the recalled products, please consult the Canadian Food inspection Agency (CFIA) recall notice on the Government of Canada Recalls and Safety Alerts website.

[Food recall warning: Various Silk and Great Value brand plant-based refrigerated beverages recalled due to *Listeria monocytogenes*](#)

How to protect your health

Listeriosis is a foodborne bacterial illness that can affect anyone exposed to a contaminated food product, including the recalled products.

While healthy individuals can fall ill from a *Listeria* infection, the disease can be fatal for unborn babies, newborns, individuals over age 60, and those with weakened immune systems.

The following advice applies to individuals across Canada:

- Check to see if you have recalled products in your homes or establishment by looking for the specific product name and size, UPC and codes in the recall alert.
- Do **not** consume, serve, use, sell or distribute recalled products or any product made with them.

- Recalled products should be thrown out or returned to the location where they were purchased. Consumers who are unsure if they have purchased the recalled products are advised to contact their retailer.
- Do **not** cook food for other people if you've been diagnosed with a *Listeria* infection or any other gastrointestinal illness.
- Contact your health care provider if you think you're experiencing symptoms of *Listeria* infection.

Those who are most at risk of becoming sick with severe listeriosis include:

- People with weakened immune systems (unable to fight diseases easily).
- Adults over the age of 60. The risk increases with age due to a weakening immune system.
- People who are pregnant, including their unborn or newborn baby.

What are the complication risks?

If you have severe listeriosis, you can develop meningitis (a brain infection) and/or blood poisoning. Severe listeriosis can be fatal. Although people infected while pregnant may only experience mild, flu-like symptoms, listeriosis can spread to their unborn baby, and it can cause:

- a miscarriage
 - this is when your baby dies in the womb before the 20th week of pregnancy
- a stillbirth
 - this is when your baby dies in the womb after 20 weeks of pregnancy (before delivery)

- a premature birth
- life-threatening illness in your baby shortly after birth

Symptoms

Symptoms of listeriosis can start as early as 3 days after eating contaminated food. You may have the following symptoms:

- fever
- nausea
- cramps
- diarrhea
- vomiting
- headache
- constipation
- muscle aches

In severe cases, the bacteria can spread to the nervous system (the brain, spinal cord and nerves). Symptoms of severe listeriosis include:

- stiff neck
- confusion
- headache
- loss of balance

Symptoms of severe listeriosis may appear up to 70 days after you have been exposed to *Listeria*.

Investigation summary

There are 12 laboratory-confirmed cases of *Listeria monocytogenes* illness linked to this outbreak in:

- Ontario (10)
- Quebec (1)
- Nova Scotia (1)

People became sick between August 2023 and early July 2024. Of the cases reported to us, nine people have been hospitalized and two individuals have died. Many people who became sick reported drinking [recalled](#) plant-based beverages before their illnesses occurred.

People who became sick are between 37 and 89 years old. Most of them are:

- adults 60 years of age or older (58%)
- over half of the cases (67%) are female.

More recent illnesses may continue to be reported in the outbreak because there is a period between when a person becomes ill and when the illness is reported to public health officials. For this outbreak, the illness reporting period is between 9 and 35 days.

This outbreak may not be limited to the provinces or territories with known illnesses because the recalled plant-based beverages were distributed to nationally.

Timeline of illnesses

Related links

- [Various Silk and Great Value brand plant-based refrigerated beverages recalled due to Listeria monocytogenes](#)
- [Ontario Warns About Product Recall Due to Listeria Contamination](#)
- [Risks of listeriosis \(Listeria\)](#)
- [Safe food handling practices](#)

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