Salmonella Outbreak Linked to Ground Beef

Investigation Notice

Posted August 23, 2023

This outbreak is over. Any ground beef can have germs, like *Salmonella*. Always cook ground beef to an internal temperature of 160°F.

Fast Facts

- Illnesses: 18
- Hospitalizations: 7
- Deaths: 0
- States: 4
- Recall: No
- Investigation status: Closed

Outbreak Investigation Summary

Ground beef was the only common food people reported eating. Of the people who remembered the type of ground beef they ate, most reported eating 80% lean ground beef before they got sick. Traceback information did not identify a common source of ground beef.

What You Should Do

Follow these four food safety steps to prevent getting sick from *Salmonella*.

- **Clean**:
  - Wash any bowls, utensils, and surfaces that touch raw ground beef with soap and water before using them to prepare other foods.
  - Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after preparing raw ground beef and before touching other kitchen items.
- **Separate**:
  - When shopping, separate raw ground beef from other foods in your shopping cart and grocery bags. Place packages of raw ground beef into individual plastic bags to avoid cross-contamination.

    - Keep raw ground beef separate from foods that will not be cooked.
    - Store raw ground beef in a container or sealed, leakproof bag on the lowest shelf in the fridge or freezer.
- **Cook**:
    - Use a food thermometer to make sure you have cooked meat to a temperature high enough to kill germs. Ground beef should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160°F, and leftovers should be heated to an internal temperature of 165°
    - Eating raw or undercooked ground beef can make you sick.
- **Chill**:
    - Raw ground beef that has been refrigerated should be used or frozen within 1 or 2 days.
    - Refrigerate or freeze ground beef within 2 hours of cooking. If the food is exposed to temperatures hotter than 90°F, like a hot car or picnic, refrigerate or freeze within 1 hour.
    - Freeze any meat that will not be used within a few days. Although freezing can help keep ground beef safe until you can cook it, it does not kill existing harmful germs.
    - Thaw frozen ground beef in the refrigerator, not on the counter.

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.
- For more information about *Salmonella*, see the *Salmonella* Questions and Answers page.

Investigation Details

Posted August 23, 2023

This outbreak is over. Any ground beef can have germs, like *Salmonella*. Always cook ground beef to an internal temperature of 160°F.

August 23, 2023

CDC, public health and regulatory officials in several states, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA-FSIS) investigated a multistate outbreak of *Salmonella* Saintpaul infections.

Epidemiologic data showed that ground beef was the likely source of the outbreak. However, there were not enough other data to identify a common source of the ground beef.

As of August 23, 2023, this outbreak is over.

Epidemiologic Data

As of August 23, 2023, a total of 18 people infected with the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* were reported from 4 states. Illnesses started on dates ranging from April 27, 2023, through July 6, 2023.

The true number of sick people in this outbreak was likely much higher than the number reported, and the outbreak may not have been 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.

Public health officials collected 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 provided clues to help investigators identify the source of the outbreak. The table below has information about sick people in this outbreak ("n" is the number of people with information available for each demographic).