

E. coli Outbreak Linked to Organic Carrots

Key points

Investigation status: Open

Recall issued: Yes

CDC and public health officials in several states are investigating a multistate outbreak of *E. coli* O121 infections linked to multiple brands of recalled organic whole bagged carrots and baby carrots sold by Grimmway Farms. Carrots on store shelves right now are likely not affected but may be in people's homes. If you have any recalled carrots in your home, throw them out or return them to the store.

Fast Facts

- **Cases:** 39
- **Hospitalizations:** 15
- **Deaths:** 1
- **States:** 18

Recalled food

On November 16, 2024, Grimmway Farms recalled multiples sizes and brands of bagged organic baby and whole carrots. These products are likely no longer in stores for sale but may still be in your home.

Baby Organic Carrots

- Best-if-used-by dates ranging from 9/11/2024 to 11/12/2024
- Brands: 365, Bunny Luv, Cal-Organic, Compliments, Full Circle, Good & Gather, GreenWise, Grimmway Farms, Marketside, Nature's Promise, O-Organic, President's Choice, Raley's, Simple Truth, Sprouts, Trader Joe's, Wegmans, Wholesome Pantry

Whole Organic Carrots

- Were available for purchase in stores approximately from 8/14/2024 through 10/23/2024
- No best-if-used-by-dates are on the bags of organic whole carrots.
- Brands: 365, Bunny Luv, Cal-Organic, Compliments, Full Circle, Good & Gather, GreenWise, Marketside, Nature's Promise, O-Organic, President's Choice, Simple Truth, Trader Joe's, Wegmans, Wholesome Pantry

See the [recall](#) for detailed information about brands and sizes.

What you should do

- **Do not eat any recalled bagged organic carrots.** Check your refrigerators or freezers for recalled carrots and throw them away.
- Wash items and surfaces that may have touched the recalled organic carrots using hot soapy water or a dishwasher.

Call your healthcare provider if you have severe *E. coli* 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 bagged organic carrots.**
- **Wash and sanitize items and surfaces** that may have come in contact with recalled bagged organic carrots.

Symptoms of *E. coli*

- Most people infected with Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* experience severe stomach cramps, diarrhea (often bloody), and vomiting.
 - Symptoms usually start 3 to 4 days after swallowing the bacteria.
 - Most people recover without treatment after 5 to 7 days.
- Some people may develop serious kidney problems (hemolytic uremic syndrome, also called HUS) and would need to be hospitalized.

Investigation Update: *E. coli* Outbreak, Organic Carrots, November 2024

KEY POINTS

CDC and public health officials in several states are investigating a multistate outbreak of *E. coli* O121 infections linked to multiple brands of recalled organic whole bagged carrots and baby carrots sold by Grimmway Farms. Carrots on store shelves right now are likely not affected but may be in people's homes. If you have any recalled carrots in your home, throw them out or return them to the store.

November 17, 2024

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 *E. coli* O121 infections.

Epidemiologic and traceback data show that organic carrots supplied by Grimmway Farms may be contaminated with *E. coli* and are making people sick.

Epidemiologic data

As of November 17, 2024, 39 people infected with the outbreak strain of *E. coli* have been reported from 18 states. Illnesses started on dates ranging from September 6, 2024 to October 28, 2024. Of 38 people with information available, 15 have been hospitalized and none developed hemolytic uremic syndrome, a serious condition that can cause kidney failure. One death has been reported from California.

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 *E. coli*. 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 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.

The table below has information about sick people in this outbreak ("n" is the number of people with information available for each demographic).

Demographics

Information

Age

(n=39)

Range from 1 to 75 years

Median age of 29

Sex

(n=38)

71% female

29% male

Race

(n=32)

93% White

3% African American/Black

0% Native American or Alaska Native

3% Asian

0% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

0% reported more than one race

Ethnicity

(n=34)

97% non-Hispanic

3% Hispanic

State and local public health officials are interviewing people about the foods they ate in the week before they got sick. Of the 27 people interviewed, 26 (96%) reported eating carrots. This percentage was significantly higher than the 63% of respondents who reported eating organic carrots 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 organic carrots.

Laboratory and traceback information

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.

People reported buying different brands of carrots from multiple stores. FDA's traceback of some of these purchases identified Grimmway Farms as the common supplier of organic whole and baby carrots in this outbreak. In response, on November 16, 2024, Grimmway Farms initiated a voluntary recall of these carrots and contacted their distributors. FDA is working with Grimmway Farms to determine the source of contamination, whether additional products are affected, and what retailers received the recalled carrots.

Public health actions

Although the recalled bagged organic whole and baby carrots are likely no longer available for sale in stores, they could still be in your home. Check your refrigerator or freezer and throw them away. CDC is advising people not eat, sell, or serve recalled bagged organic carrots.