2025 Outbreak of Shiga toxin-Producing E. coli (STEC) Infections Linked to Twin Sisters Creamery Aged Raw Milk Cheese

Last Updated: December 10, 2025

Washington State Department of Health worked with local, state, Oregon Health Authority and federal public health partners to investigate Shiga Toxin-Producing E. coli (STEC) infections linked to consumption of aged, raw milk cheese.

In Washington

Quick Facts

- **Cases:** 9
- **Hospitalizations:** 1
- **Status:** Outbreak is over
- **Recall:** Yes

Updates

November 12, 2025

One additional Washington resident has been added to this outbreak, bringing the total to 10 cases – 9 Washington residents and 1 Oregon resident. All cases report illness onsets before the cheese was recalled on October 24, 2025.

November 6, 2025

Samples of Twin Sisters Creamery cheese have tested positive for two different STEC strains associated with human cases: *E. coli* O103 and *E. coli* O26.

Two Washington residents and one Oregon resident have been infected with *E. coli* O103. Molecular fingerprinting of the E. *coli* O103 bacteria from the three cases is extremely similar to the *E. coli* O103 identified in both the Twin Sisters Creamery Farmhouse and Whatcom Blue cheeses.

Six Washington residents have been infected with *E. coli* O26. Molecular fingerprinting of the *E. coli* O26 bacteria from the six cases is extremely similar to the *E. coli* O26 bacteria identified in the Twin Sister's Creamery Peppercorn Farmhouse cheese.

Twin Sisters Creamery brand cheese sample	**Where Collected**	**Where Tested**	**Shiga**
Farmhouse variety (opened)	Case's Home	Commercial Lab	*E. coli* O103
Whatcom Blue variety	Retail Store	Washington State Department of Agriculture	*E. coli* O103
Peppercorn Farmhouse variety (unopened)	Case's Home	Food and Drug Administration	*E. coli* O26
Farmhouse variety	Retail Store	Washington State Public Health Lab	*E. coli* NOS*

*NOS: Not otherwise specified--this strain of Shiga toxin *E. coli* is not typeable at the Washington State Public Health Lab

About *E coli*

E. coli are bacteria that normally live in the intestines of humans and animals. Although most strains are harmless, some can cause illness by making a toxin called Shiga toxin. The bacteria that make these toxins are called "Shiga toxin-producing" *E. coli*, or STEC for short.

People usually get STEC infection by eating contaminated foods or drinks that have not been thoroughly cooked or pasteurized (heat treated). Symptoms may include diarrhea, stomach cramps, or blood in the stool. Some infected people have symptoms at all.

To prevent E. *coli* infection

- Do not eat raw beef or raw or under-cooked hamburger or other ground meat products.
- Keep ready-to-eat foods (i.e., raw vegetables) away from raw meat.
- Drink only pasteurized (not raw) milk, milk products and fruit juices.

October 27, 2025

Two Washington residents and one Oregon resident have developed STEC infections caused by *E. coli* O103. Molecular fingerprinting of the bacteria from the three cases is extremely similar, suggesting a common source is the cause of the infections.

One individual is a child (<5 years of age) and two individuals are adults. Illnesses occurred between September 5 and September 16, 2025.

The Oregon case reported consuming Twin Sisters Creamery Farmhouse cheese prior to onset of symptoms. This cheese is made from raw, unpasteurized milk. This cheese is aged at least 60 days, as required by law, to reduce potential pathogens. An opened, leftover Twin Sisters Creamery Farmhouse cheese sample tested positive for *E. coli* O103 and the molecular fingerprinting of this organism is very similar to fingerprints from the case-organisms.

A second, unopened Twin Sisters Creamery cheese collected from a retail location by the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) also tested positive for STEC. Additional unopened samples of cheese from multiple retail locations were collected for testing with results pending.

This investigation is ongoing. Twin Sisters Creamery is cooperating with the investigation.

Recalled Food

All sizes of Whatcom Blue, Farmhouse, Peppercorn and Mustard Seed varieties of aged cheese from Twin Sisters Creamery produced on or after 5/27/2025 are being recalled. Dates listed in recall notices from Twin Sisters Creamery and a distributor, Peterson Company, are the dates the cheese were shipped to retailers and distributors.

- #450 Made on 5/27/2025 - Batch Code 250527B Whatcom Blue
- #452 Made on 6/10/2025 - Batch Code 250610B Whatcom Blue
- #454 Made on 6/18/2025 - Batch Code 250618B Whatcom Blue
- #455 Made on 6/24/2025 - Batch Code 250625B Whatcom Blue
- #451 Made on 6/03/2025 - Batch Code 250603F Farmhouse
- #453 Made on 6/16/2025 - Batch Code 250616B Farmhouse
- #451 Made on 6/03/2025 - Batch Code 250603P Peppercorn
- #453 Made on 6/16/2025 - Batch Code 250616 Mustard Seed

Some cheese products were repackaged by grocery stores and markets, so the original label may not be present. In these instances, the grocery store/market label should say the brand of cheese.

Local, state, and federal partners continue to investigate the source of illness for outbreak-related cases and additional products may be recalled or identified as a possible source of infection in the future.

Company Recall Notice: Twin Sisters Creamery Recalls Whatcom Blue, Farmhouse, Peppercorn, and Mustard Seed Cheese Products Because of Possible Health Risk | FDA

Distributor Recall Notice: Peterson Company Recalls Twin Sisters Creamery Brand Whatcom Blue and Farmhouse Cheese Products Because of Possible Health Risk | FDA

Image



Image



Image



Image



Cases by County of Residence

County	Cases
Chelan	1
Pierce	2
Snohomish	1
Whatcom	5
Total Cases	**8**

Advice to Consumers

- **Do not eat any recalled Whatcom Blue, Farmhouse, Peppercorn, and Mustard Seed varieties of Twin Sisters Creamery cheese.**Check your refrigerators or freezers for this brand and variety of cheese and throw them away.

    - If there is no “Made On” date or Batch Code on the cheese packaging, please throw them away.
- **Wash items and surfaces** that may have touched the cheese using hot soapy water or a dishwasher.
- **Contact your healthcare provider** right away if you have any of these severe STEC *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.
- The following people should avoid consuming any type of cheese made with unpasteurized (raw) milk unless heated to 165° F or until steaming hot:
    - People who are pregnant
    - Newborns
    - People aged 65 years and older
    - People who have weakened immune systems because they:
        - were notified by a health care provider that you have a weakened immune system
        - have a health condition that weakens the immune system such as cancer, diabetes, liver or kidney disease, alcoholism, HIV infection or AIDS, etc.
        - are on a treatment that makes it more difficult for the body to fight off illness, such as steroids or chemotherapy

Advice to Retailers

- Check to see if you received Twin Sisters Creamery Cheese, Whatcom Blue, Farmhouse, Peppercorn, and Mustard Seed varieties produced since 5/27/2025.
    - If you are unsure if you received the recalled product, please contact your supplier.
- If you received the recalled lots:

    - **Do not sell or serve the recalled cheese.**
    - If possible, notify your customers who may have purchased the recalled cheese or items in-store that include the recalled cheese
    - Place signs at locations where the cheese were sold to help notify consumers
- **Wash and sanitize items and surfaces** that may have come in contact with Twin Sisters Creamery brand cheese.

Outbreak-Specific Resources

- Company Recall Notice: Twin Sisters Creamery Recalls Whatcom Blue, Farmhouse, Peppercorn, and Mustard Seed Cheese Products Because of Possible Health Risk | FDA
- Distributor Recall Notice: Peterson Company Recalls Twin Sisters Creamery Brand Whatcom Blue and Farmhouse Cheese Products Because of Possible Health Risk | FDA
- WA DOH Food Recall: Food Recalls and Safety Alerts | Washington State Department of Health