



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
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Multistate Outbreak of Listeriosis Linked to Imported Frescolina Marte Brand Ricotta Salata Cheese

Posted October 12, 2012 3:30 PM ET

At a Glance:

- **Case Count: 20** (</listeria/outbreaks/cheese-09-12/epi.html>)
- **States: 13** (</listeria/outbreaks/cheese-09-12/map.html>)
- **Deaths: 4**
- **Hospitalizations: 19**
- **Recall: Yes** (</listeria/outbreaks/cheese-09-12/advice-consumers.html>)

More Information:

- Recall & Advice to Consumers (</listeria/outbreaks/cheese-09-12/advice-consumers.html>)
- Signs & Symptoms (</listeria/outbreaks/cheese-09-12/signs-symptoms.html>)
- Key Resources (</listeria/outbreaks/cheese-09-12/key-resources.html>)

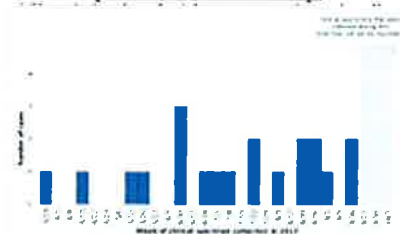
Latest Case Count Map



[\(/listeria/outbreaks/cheese-09-12/map.html\)](/listeria/outbreaks/cheese-09-12/map.html)

Latest Epi Curve

[Click map to view case count map.](#)



[\(/listeria/outbreaks/cheese-09-12/epi.html\)](/listeria/outbreaks/cheese-09-12/epi.html)

[Click graph to view epi curve graph.](#)

[\(/listeria/outbreaks/cheese-09-12/epi.html\)](/listeria/outbreaks/cheese-09-12/epi.html)

Highlights

- **Read the Advice to Consumers & Cheese Retailers**
» (</listeria/outbreaks/cheese-09-12/advice-consumers.html>)
- As of October 11, 2012, a total of 20 persons infected with the outbreak-associated strain of *Listeria monocytogenes* have been reported from 12 states and the District of Columbia.

- 19 ill persons reported being hospitalized. Four deaths have been reported. Listeriosis contributed to at least two of these deaths. One fetal loss has also been reported.
- Collaborative investigation efforts of local, state, and federal public health and regulatory agencies indicate that imported ricotta salata cheese is the likely source of this outbreak.
 - On September 14, 2012, Forever Cheese, Inc. issued an expanded recall of all lots and production codes (<http://www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/ucm321245.htm>)  (<http://www.cdc.gov/Other/disclaimer.html>) of Frescolina Marte brand ricotta salata cheese and issued a market withdrawal of all cheeses they received that were produced by the Italian cheese exporter.
 - Frescolina Marte brand ricotta salata cheese may also have been referred to as Ricotta Frescolina Marte Tipo Toscanella or Ricotta Salata Soft (<http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/CORENetwork/ucm319197>)  (<http://www.cdc.gov/Other/disclaimer.html>) (lot number T9425) during distribution.
 - Labeling of the recalled ricotta salata cheese (<http://www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/ucm319305.htm>)  (<http://www.cdc.gov/Other/disclaimer.html>) after it was cut and repackaged has been inconsistent. Be aware that labels of repackaged cheese may not include the words "Marte" or "Frescolina."
- Consumers who purchased recalled Marte brand Frescolina ricotta salata cheese are advised not to eat it and to discard any remaining cheese.
 - This is especially important for pregnant women, persons with weakened immune systems, and older adults.
- Cheese retailers should not sell or serve recalled Marte brand Frescolina ricotta cheese distributed by Forever Cheese, Inc., regardless of any expiration coding.

October 12, 2012

Case Count Update

A total of 20 persons infected with the outbreak-associated strain of *Listeria monocytogenes* have been reported from 12 states and the District of Columbia. The two new cases are from California.

Among persons for whom information is available, dates when clinical specimens were collected range from March 28, 2012 to September 19, 2012. Nineteen ill persons reported being hospitalized. Nine of the illnesses were related to a pregnancy; three of these illnesses were diagnosed in newborns. The other 11 ill persons range in age from 30 years to 87 years, with a median age of 77 years, and 55% of them are female.

Four deaths have been reported, one each from Minnesota, New York, Nebraska, and California. Listeriosis did not contribute to the death in Minnesota, but contributed to at least two of the other deaths. One fetal loss also has been reported.

Results of testing of clinical specimens that were collected after September 24, 2012 might not be reported yet due to the time it takes between when a person becomes ill and when the illness is reported. The recalled cheese should be off store shelves now because the recall began on September 10, 2012, and was expanded on September 14, 2012. However, more ill persons may be reported because up to 2 months can elapse between eating contaminated food and developing listeriosis.

September 27, 2012

Case Count Update

A total of 18 persons infected with the outbreak-associated strain of *Listeria monocytogenes* have been reported from 12 states and the District of Columbia. The 3 new cases are from New Jersey (2) and Pennsylvania (1).

Among persons for whom information is available, dates when clinical specimens were collected range from March 28, 2012 to September 5, 2012. All 18 ill persons reported being hospitalized. Six of the illnesses were related to a pregnancy; two of these illnesses were diagnosed in newborns. The other 12 ill persons range in age from 30 years to 87 years, with a median age of 75 years, and 58% percent of them are female.

Three deaths have been reported, one each from Nebraska, New York, and Minnesota. Listeriosis did not contribute to the death in Minnesota, but contributed to at least one of the other deaths. One fetal loss has been reported.

Results of testing of clinical specimens that were collected after September 8, 2012 might not be reported yet due to the time it takes between when a person becomes ill and when the illness is reported. The recalled cheese should be off store shelves now because the recall began on September 10, 2012, and was expanded on September 14, 2012. However, more ill persons may be reported because up to 2 months can elapse between eating contaminated food and developing listeriosis.

September 21, 2012

Case Count Update

A total of 15 persons infected with the outbreak strain of *Listeria monocytogenes* have been reported from 12 states and the District of Columbia. This includes one new case from Washington state.

Among persons for whom information is available, illness onset dates range from March 28, 2012 to August 30, 2012. All 15 ill persons reported being hospitalized. Four of the illnesses were related to a pregnancy; two of these illnesses were diagnosed in newborns. The other 11 ill persons range in age from 30 years to 87 years, with a median age of 77 years, and 64% percent of them are female. No fetal losses have been reported. Three deaths have been reported. Listeriosis contributed to at least one of the deaths in Nebraska and New York, but did not contribute to the death in Minnesota.

Results of testing of clinical specimens that were collected after September 4, 2012 might not be reported yet due to the time it takes between when a person becomes ill and when the illness is reported.

Initial Announcement

September 11, 2012

CDC is collaborating with public health and regulatory officials in several states and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to investigate a multistate outbreak of *Listeria monocytogenes* infections (listeriosis). Joint investigation efforts indicate that ricotta salata cheese is the likely source.

Public health investigators are using DNA “fingerprints” of *Listeria* obtained through diagnostic testing with pulsed-field gel electrophoresis, or PFGE, to identify cases of illness that may be part of this outbreak. They are using data from PulseNet (<http://www.cdc.gov/pulsenet/>), the national subtyping network made up of state and local public health laboratories and federal food regulatory laboratories that performs molecular surveillance of foodborne infections... ([show more »](#)) (#)

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