



[Home](#) > [Food Safety](#) > [Public Health Notices](#) > Public Health Notice - *E. coli* O157:H7 illness related to cheese produced by Gort's Gouda Cheese Farm

Public Health Notice - *E. coli* O157:H7 illness related to cheese produced by Gort's Gouda Cheese Farm

Updated November 15 2013

*This Notice has been updated to include one additional case of *E. coli* O157:H7 in British Columbia and to indicate the closing of the investigation.*

Why you should take note

Since our last update, one additional case has been reported in British Columbia as part of this investigation. This is not a recent case; the individual became ill in late September. In total, 28 cases were reported as part of this outbreak. Collaborative investigation efforts by provincial and federal health authorities and food regulatory partners confirmed that certain unpasteurised cheese products manufactured by Gort's Gouda Cheese Farm in Salmon Arm, British Columbia, were identified as the source of the illnesses.

Given no new cases have occurred since the end of September, this outbreak appears to be over. The outbreak investigation is now closed.

For a list of affected cheese products, check the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's [website](#) . Do not eat any of the recalled product. Check your refrigerator and if you have any of the recalled product in your home, return it to the point of purchase or throw it out.

The Public Health Agency of Canada, in collaboration with provincial/territorial partners, will continue to monitor for and investigate any new cases of *E. coli* that may be related to this outbreak as part of its routine surveillance activities.

Outbreak Summary

A total of 28 cases of illness were reported as part of this outbreak; 13 in British Columbia, 10 in Alberta, 2 in Saskatchewan, 2 in Manitoba and 1 in Quebec. More information about the [epidemiological investigation](#) is also available.

More information about products that have been recalled and how the investigation has unfolded is available on the [CFIA website](#) .

What you should do

Most strains of *E. coli* do not cause severe illness; however, some strains, such as *E. coli* O157:H7, can make people sick, causing strong stomach cramps, diarrhea and vomiting. Serious complications of an *E. coli* O157:H7 infection can include kidney failure.

If you think you are sick with an *E. coli* infection, consult a healthcare professional.

Symptoms of an *E. coli* O157:H7 infection

Like other food-borne illnesses, the symptoms of *E. coli* infection mainly involve the gut. Symptoms may vary from person to person; however, they often include:

- severe stomach cramps;

- diarrhea (often watery and may develop into bloody);
- vomiting; and
- fever (generally not very high-usually less than 38.5°C/101°F).

Symptoms usually last 5 to 10 days.

Overall, around 5 to 10 per cent of those who get sick from *E. coli* O157:H7 develop hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), an acute renal failure which can be fatal. Of those, children younger than five years old and the elderly are at greatest risk of developing HUS. Symptoms of HUS vary. Some people have seizures or strokes and some need blood transfusions and kidney dialysis. Others live with side effects such as permanent kidney damage.

Who is most at risk?

Infections can occur among people of all ages, however symptoms are likely to be more severe among the very young and the elderly. Pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems are also at high risk of developing serious complications.

How to protect yourself

Proper hygiene and safe food handling and preparation practices are key to preventing the spread of all food-borne illnesses, including *E. coli*.

Hand washing is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of food-borne illness.

General food safety

Everyone should practice these [general food safety precautions](#) at all times:

- Wash your hands before and after cooking;
- Keep knives, counters and cutting boards clean;
- Keep raw meats separate from other foods when you store them; and
- Refrigerate or freeze left-overs promptly.

Additional information

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency's [information about this investigation, including recalls](#) 

The Public Health Agency of Canada's [Epidemiological Information](#)

The Public Health Agency of Canada's [E. coli O157:H7 fact sheet](#)

The Public Health Agency of Canada's [Anatomy of a Foodborne Illness Outbreak](#)

The Public Health Agency of Canada's video series, [Something you ate?](#)

The Government of Canada [food safety web portal](#) 

Healthy Canadians [Raw or unpasteurized milk](#) 

Date Modified: 2013-11-15



Home > Food Safety > Public Health Notices > Public Health Notice - *E. coli* O157:H7 illness related to cheese produced by Gort's Gouda Cheese Farm > Epidemiological information

Epidemiological information: *E. coli* O157:H7 illness related to cheese produced by Gort's Gouda Cheese Farm

15 November 2013

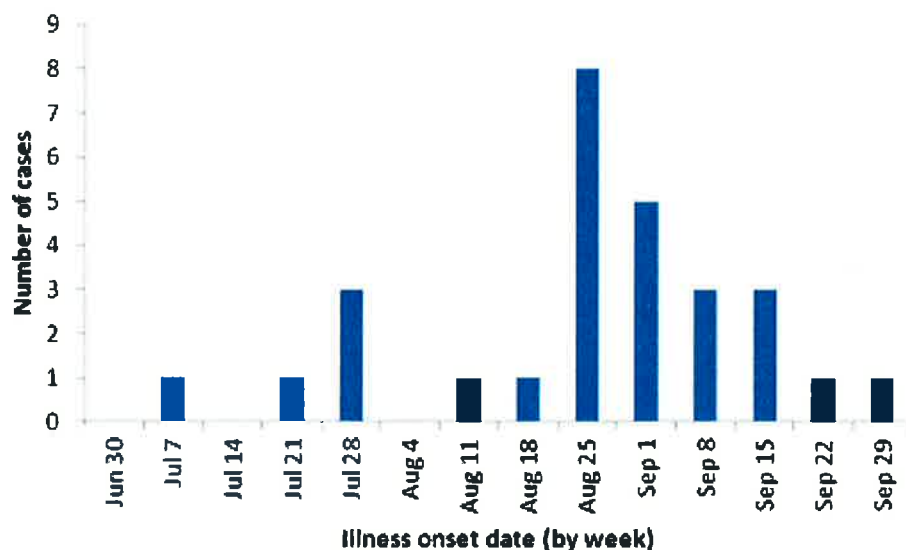
What is epidemiology?

Epidemiology is the study of disease in a population. Epidemiologists, or "disease detectives," use surveillance systems to identify those who are sick and confirm that the sick people are part of this event. They then gather information from the people who got sick and review the clues from all parts of the investigation that might reveal the cause of the illness event.

The figure below forms part of the epidemiological investigation into this outbreak. An "epi curve" ([Figure 1](#)) is a valuable reference tool in any epidemiological investigation. An epi curve shows when cases begin, when they peak, and when they trail off. Certain details of the people who got sick ([Table 1](#)) also help epidemiologists as they work to solve the questions involved in foodborne illness.

For more information on specific cases please contact the appropriate provincial health authority.

Figure 1. Number of people infected with the outbreak strain of *E. coli*



[Text equivalent for figure 1](#)

Table 1: At a Glance

Outbreak status	Ongoing
Case count	28
Provinces/Territories	5
Deaths	1
Hospitalizations	4
Cases with Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS)	1
Gender (m:f)	11:17
Age range in years	3-82

Outbreak status	Ongoing
Recall	<u>Yes</u> 

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Canadian Food Inspection Agency

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> 2013-09-17

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Notice

This archive of previously issued food recalls and allergy alerts is provided for reference and research purposes.

Users should note that the products listed in the archive have been subject to removal from the marketplace or appropriate corrective action. Food recalls or allergy alerts are not an indication of the food safety status of products produced at a later date.

Health Hazard Alert - Certain Gort's Gouda Cheese Farm brand raw milk cheeses may contain *E. coli* O157:H7 bacteria

Recall / advisory date:	September 17, 2013
Reason for recall / advisory:	Microbiological - <i>E. coli</i> O157:H7
Hazard classification:	Class 1
Company / Firm:	Gort's Gouda Cheese Farm (EST 4478)
Distribution:	Alberta, British Columbia, Possibly National
Extent of the distribution:	Retail
Reference number:	8340

Contents

- [Advisory details](#)
- [Affected products](#)
- [More information](#)
- [Media Enquiries](#)
- [Related Recalls](#)
- [Photos](#)

Advisory details

Ottawa, September 17, 2013 - The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and Gort's Gouda Cheese Farm (EST 4478) are warning the public not to consume cheese products described below because they may be contaminated with *E. coli* O157:H7.

This recall is the result of an ongoing food safety investigation initiated as a result of a recent outbreak investigation. There may be recalls of additional products as the investigation at this facility continues.

All sizes of the raw milk cheeses listed below are affected by this recall.

These affected products were sold at the manufacturer's outlet, at retail stores in Alberta and British Columbia, and through internet sale from May 27 to September 14, 2013, inclusive.

Lot codes 122 to 138 are affected by this recall.

Some product packages may not bear a lot code or indicate that the cheese was made with raw milk. These products were also sold clerk-served from deli counters with or without a label or coding. Consumers who are unsure if they have purchased the affected product are advised to contact their retailer.

There have been reported illnesses associated with the consumption of these products.

The manufacturer, Gort's Gouda Cheese Farm, Salmon Arm, BC is voluntarily recalling the affected products from the marketplace. The CFIA is monitoring the effectiveness of the recall.

Affected products

Brand Name	Common Name
Gort's Gouda Cheese Farm	Medium Gouda Cheese Quaso de Prato
Gort's Gouda Cheese Farm	Aged Quaso de Prato
Gort's Gouda Cheese Farm	X Aged Quaso de Prato
Gort's Gouda Cheese Farm	Cumin Quaso de Prato
Gort's Gouda Cheese Farm	Greek Blend: Onion, Paprika, Parsley, Pepper, Thyme, Oregano Quaso de Prato
Gort's Gouda Cheese Farm	Gouda Cheese with Jalapeno Peppers Quaso de Prato
Gort's Gouda Cheese Farm	Smoked Gouda Cheese Quaso de Prato
Gort's Gouda Cheese Farm	Gouda Cheese with Red Peppers, Ginger Onions & Garlic Quaso de Prato
Gort's Gouda Cheese Farm	Peppercorn, Ginger, Paprika, Onion & Garlic Quaso de Prato
Gort's Gouda Cheese Farm	Parsley, Celery, Onion, Garlic, Dill & Chives Quaso de Prato
Gort's Gouda Cheese Farm	Maasdammer
Gort's Gouda Cheese Farm	Beaufort
Gort's Gouda Cheese Farm	Parmesan
Gort's Gouda Cheese Farm	Mazouda

Related alerts

2013-09-19 - Certain Gort's Gouda Cheese Farm brand Mild Gouda may contain *E. coli* O157:H7 bacteria

More information

For more information, consumers and industry can contact the CFIA by filling out [the online feedback form](#).

Food contaminated with *E. coli* O157:H7 may not look or smell spoiled. Consumption of food contaminated with these bacteria may cause serious and potentially life-threatening illnesses. Symptoms include severe abdominal pain and bloody diarrhea. Some people may have seizures or strokes and some may need blood transfusions and kidney dialysis. Others may live with permanent kidney damage. In severe cases of illness, people may die.

For more information on foodborne pathogens, visit the [Causes of Food Poisoning web page](#).

Photos

Printer ready version of photos

