



Minnesota Department of Health

Minnesota Department of Health and Minnesota Department of Agriculture

News Release

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Contact information

Health officials investigate Listeria outbreak linked to cheese

Pregnant women, newborns and adults with weakened immune systems most at risk

The Minnesota Departments of Health and Agriculture are working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on a multi-state outbreak investigation of listeriosis linked to eating Les Frères cheese made by Crave Brothers Farmstead Classics Cheese, a Wisconsin producer. The investigation is ongoing but there are related cases in at least three other states.

Two people in Minnesota so far have become ill. Both were older adults. They became ill in early June. Both were hospitalized and one died.

The Department of Agriculture is testing samples of the cheese and early results indicate presence of Listeria; confirmation is pending.

Health officials are warning consumers who may have purchased these cheeses: Les Frères, Petit Frère, Petit Frère with Truffles and still have it in their refrigerators to not eat it until more information becomes available from the investigation. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture has advised grocery stores and distributors to pull and not sell the products until further information is available.

Listeriosis is a serious infection caused by eating food contaminated with the bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes*. The disease affects primarily older adults, pregnant women, newborns, and persons with weakened immune systems. Approximately 4 to 10 cases of listeriosis are reported in Minnesota each year. Symptoms of listeriosis include fever, muscle aches, headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance, and convulsions. Infected pregnant women may experience only a mild, flu-like illness; however, infections during pregnancy can lead to miscarriage or stillbirth, premature delivery, or infection of the newborn. Symptoms often begin 3 weeks after infection, but it could take anywhere from 3 to 70 days.

Anyone who believes they may have become ill with listeriosis should contact their health care provider.

More information on Listeria can be found on the MDH website at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/listeriosis/>.

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Media inquiries:

Doug Schultz
MDH Communications
651-201-4993

Margaret Hart
MDA Communications
651-201-6131

651-201-5000 Phone
888-345-0823 Toll-free

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