



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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Multistate outbreak of Hepatitis A infections potentially associated with “Townsend Farms Organic Antioxidant Blend” frozen berry and pomegranate mix

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CDC is collaborating with public health officials in several states and the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to investigate a multistate outbreak of Hepatitis A illnesses. Preliminary results from the ongoing investigation are highlighted below.

At a Glance:

- **Case Count: 79**
- **States: 8**
- **Deaths: 0**
- **Hospitalizations: 30**
- **Recall: Yes ([advice-consumers.html](#))**

Vaccine and IG Information:

- [Hepatitis A Vaccine Schedule \(/hepatitis/HAV/HAVfaq.htm#B3\)](#)
- [Postexposure Prophylaxis - Use of vaccine and IG \(/hepatitis/HAV/HAVfaq.htm#D1\)](#)
- [Source for IG \(/hepatitis/IG-HBIG_Sources.htm\)](#)

More Information:

- [Advice to Consumers & Retailers \(\[advice-consumers.html\]\(#\)\) \(/salmonella/montevideo-tahini-05-13/signs-symptoms.html\)](#)
- [Hepatitis A Information \(/hepatitis/A/index.htm\)](#)
- [Key Resources \(\[key-resources.html\]\(#\)\)](#)

Highlights

- **Read the Advice to Consumers » ([advice-consumers.html](#))**
- As of June 7, 2013, 79 people with acute hepatitis A infections that may be linked with consumption of a contaminated product have been reported by eight states: Arizona, California Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Washington. These numbers are expected to change as the investigation continues.
- Based on epidemiologic investigation of 55 cases:
 - 35 (64%) ill people are women
 - Ages range from 2 – 84 years
 - Illness onset dates range from 3/16/2013 – 6/1/2013
 - 30 (55%) ill people have been hospitalized, and no deaths have been reported
 - 40 (73%) of 55 ill people interviewed reported eating “Townsend Farms Organic Antioxidant Blend” frozen berry and pomegranate mix
 - 40 persons reported purchasing this product from Costco markets; however, the product was also sold at Harris Teeter stores. No cases have been identified that bought the product at Harris Teeter at this time.

- Investigation by state and local health departments, FDA, and CDC is ongoing. Costco notified its members who purchased this product since late February 2013, and has removed the “Townsend Farms Organic Antioxidant Blend” frozen berry and pomegranate mix from its shelves.
- On June 3, 2013, Townsend Farms, Inc. of Fairview, Oregon voluntarily recalled certain lots of its frozen Organic Antioxidant Blend (<http://www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/ucm355166.htm>)  (<http://www.cdc.gov/Other/disclaimer.html>) because it has the potential to be contaminated with hepatitis A virus.
- Preliminary laboratory studies of specimens from two states suggest the outbreak strain of hepatitis A virus (HAV) is genotype 1B. This strain is rarely seen in the Americas but circulates in the North Africa and Middle East regions.
- This genotype was identified in a 2013 outbreak in Europe linked to frozen berries and another 2012 outbreak in British Columbia related to a frozen berry blend with pomegranate seeds from Egypt. However, there is no evidence at this time that these outbreaks are related.
- According to the label, the “Townsend Farms Organic Antioxidant Blend” frozen berry and pomegranate mix associated with illness contained products originating from the U.S., Argentina, Chile, and Turkey.
- Hepatitis A is a human disease and usually occurs when an infected food handler prepares food without appropriate hand hygiene. However, food contaminated with HAV, as is suspected in this outbreak, can cause outbreaks of disease among persons who eat or handle food.

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