



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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

Posted June 18, 2013 10:00 AM ET

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:

- **Cases under investigation: 118** (</hepatitis/Outbreaks/2013/A1b-03-31/epi.html>)
- **States: 8** (</hepatitis/Outbreaks/2013/A1b-03-31/map.html>)
- **Deaths: 0**
- **Hospitalizations: 47**
- **Recall: Yes** (<advice-consumers.html>)

Vaccine and IG Information:

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

More Information:

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

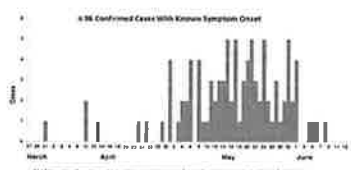
Latest Case Count Map

[\(map.html\)](map.html)

[Click map to view case count map. \(map.html\)](map.html)

Latest Epi Curve

Hepatitis A Virus Infection Possibly Associated with Consumption of Frozen Berry and Pomegranate Mix: Epidemic Curve by Date of Symptom Onset



([epi.html](#))

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

Highlights

- **[Read the Advice to Consumers » \(advice-consumers.html\)](#)**

- As of June 17, 2013, we are investigating acute hepatitis A illnesses in 118 people in eight states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Washington.

- Based on completed epidemiologic investigations of 112 cases:

- 66 (59%) ill people are women
- Ages range from 2 – 87 years
- Illness onset dates range from 3/16/2013 – 6/8/2013
- 47 (42%) ill people have been hospitalized, and no deaths have been reported
- 80 of 112 (71%) ill people interviewed reported eating “Townsend Farms Organic Anti-Oxidant Blend” frozen berry and pomegranate mix
- All those who reported eating this product purchased it 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. The product was distributed in 12 states (AZ, AK, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, NM, OR, UT, and WA); however, no cases from Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, or Montana have been linked to the outbreak at this time.

- FDA has begun an inspection of the processing facilities of Townsend Farms of Fairview, Oregon.
- The FDA is also finalizing a protocol to test berries for the Hepatitis A virus (HAV), and will be testing samples related to the outbreak, including the frozen blend for the presence of HAV.

- 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 five states suggest the outbreak strain of hepatitis A virus (HAV) is genotype 1B. This strain is rarely seen in the Americas but circulates in North Africa and the Middle East.

- 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 to the current U.S. outbreak.

- 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.

Page last reviewed: June 18, 2013

Page last updated: June 18, 2013

Content source: Division of Viral Hepatitis and

National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 1600 Clifton Rd. Atlanta, GA

30333, USA

800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) TTY: (888) 232-6348 - Contact CDC-INFO

