



Multistate Outbreak of *Listeria* linked to Meats Sliced at Delis

Update: August 8, 2024

Initial Posting: July 31, 2024

Outbreak Status: Active

The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) is working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA-FSIS) on a multistate outbreak of *Listeria* infections linked to meats sliced at delis.

- The bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes* can contaminate many food items and people who eat those foods can develop an infection called Listeriosis.
- Signs and symptoms of *Listeria* infection vary depending on the person infected. *Listeria* can cause an intestinal illness that usually lasts 1–3 days and most people recover without treatment.
- People who are pregnant, aged 65 or older, or have weakened immune systems are likely to develop a more severe condition called invasive listeriosis. CDC estimates that *Listeria* is the third leading cause of death among foodborne illnesses in the United States.
- Infection is usually diagnosed when a laboratory test detects *Listeria* in body tissue or fluid, such as blood, spinal fluid, or the placenta. Most *Listeria* infections are treated with antibiotics, but treatment depends on illness severity.

Outbreak Summary:

	Case Count	States/Counties	Illness Onset Range
National	43	13	05/29/24 – 07/19/24
NJ	4	3	06/02/24 – 07/16/24

Key Points:

- As of August 8, 2024, a total of 43 people infected with the outbreak strain of *Listeria monocytogenes* have been reported from 13 states. Illnesses began on dates from May 29 to July 19, 2024. Ill people range in age from 32 to 94 years. Of the 34 individuals with information available, all 34 were hospitalized. One person got sick during their pregnancy and remained pregnant after recovering. Unfortunately, three deaths have been reported: 1 each in Illinois, New Jersey, and Virginia.
- NJ has 4 cases associated with this outbreak from 3 counties: Monmouth (2), Passaic (1) and Ocean (1). Illness onsets range from June 2 to July 17, 2024.
- Initially, testing identified *Listeria* in an unopened package of Boar’s Head liverwurst collected as part of this investigation, which resulted in a recall. On July 26, 2024, USDA-FSIS announced that Boar’s Head Provisions Co., Inc., a Jarratt, Va., establishment, is recalling all liverwurst products produced by the establishment currently available in commerce because it may be adulterated with *Listeria monocytogenes*. On July 30, 2024, USDA-FSIS announced the [expanded recall](#) of 71 products produced between May 10, 2024, and July 29, 2024, under the Boar’s Head and Old Country brand names, due to presence of the outbreak strain of *Listeria*.
- The recalled products, which include meat intended for slicing at retail delis as well as packaged meat and poultry products, have “sell by” dates ranging from July 29, 2024 through October 17,

2024. These recalled products were distributed to retail locations nationwide and those shipped to deli retailers bear establishment number “EST. 12612” or “P-12612” inside the USDA mark of inspection on the product labels.

- The true number of sick people in this outbreak is likely higher than the number reported because some people recover without medical care and are not tested for *Listeria*. In addition, recent illnesses may not yet be reported as it usually takes 3 to 4 weeks to determine if a sick person is part of an outbreak.
- We encourage people to contact their health care provider if they have a fever and other [symptoms](#) of listeriosis (such as fatigue and muscle aches). This is especially important for individuals who are pregnant, 65 or older, or have a weakened immune system.
- CDC and USDA-FSIS recommend taking the following steps to reduce the risk of getting sick:
 - Recalled products should be thrown away or returned to the place of purchase.
 - Consumers who have purchased these products are also urged to [clean refrigerators thoroughly](#) to prevent the risk of cross-contamination.
 - People at higher risk for listeriosis should avoid eating meats sliced at the deli or heat them to an internal temperature of 165°F or until steaming hot before eating.
- NJDOH will continue to work closely with our local health and federal partners on patient interviews, testing and traceback efforts to help prevent future illness.

Additional Resources:

- [Listeria Outbreak Linked to Meats Sliced at Delis \(CDC web posting\)](#)
- [Recalls Ready-To-Eat Liverwurst and Other Deli Meat Products \(USDA web posting\)](#)
- [CDC Listeriosis webpage](#)
- [NJDOH Listeriosis webpage](#)
- [USDA-FSIS Best Practices for Retail Delicatessens](#)