

12 states including Massachusetts hit by *Listeria* outbreak from deli meats

“July 19, 2024: CDC, public health and regulatory officials in several states, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA-FSIS) are collecting different types of data to identify the food source of a multistate outbreak of *Listeria monocytogenes* infections.

Epidemiologic information shows that many people in this outbreak report eating meats sliced at deli counters. We do not have information to show that people are getting sick from prepackaged deli meats.

Epidemiologic Data

As of July 19, 2024, a total of 28 people infected with the outbreak strain of *Listeria* have been reported from 12 states (see map). Sick people’s samples were collected from May 29, 2024, to July 5, 2024 (see timeline). Of 28 people with information available, all have been hospitalized. One person got sick during their pregnancy and remained pregnant after recovering. Two deaths have been reported, 1 in Illinois and 1 in New Jersey.

The true number of sick people in this outbreak is likely higher than the number reported, and the outbreak may not be limited to the states with known illnesses. This is 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.

Public health officials collect many different types of information from sick people, including their age, race,

ethnicity, other demographics, and the foods they ate in the month before they got sick. This information provides clues to help investigators identify the source of the outbreak.

The table below has information about sick people in this outbreak (“n” is the number of people with information available for each demographic).

Demographics	Information
Age (n=27)	Range from 32 to 94 years Median age of 75
Sex (n=28)	46% female 54% male
Race (n=22)	72% White 23% African American/Black 5% Asian
Ethnicity (n=22)	96% non-Hispanic 4% Hispanic

State and local public health officials are interviewing people about the foods they ate in the month before they got sick. People are reporting eating a variety of meats sliced at deli counters. Of the 18 people able to be interviewed, 16 (89%) reported eating meats sliced at a deli, most commonly deli-sliced turkey, liverwurst, and ham. Meats were sliced at a variety of supermarket and grocery store delis.

CDC conducted an analysis comparing foods reported by people in this outbreak to foods reported by people who got sick with *Listeria* but were not part of an outbreak. The analysis showed that people in this outbreak were more likely to eat deli-sliced turkey and liverwurst. This information suggests that meats sliced at the deli are a likely source of this outbreak. However, at this time CDC doesn't have enough information to say which deli meats are the source of this outbreak.

Laboratory and Traceback Data

Public health investigators are using the PulseNet system to identify illnesses that may be part of this outbreak. CDC PulseNet manages a national database of DNA fingerprints of bacteria that cause foodborne illnesses. DNA fingerprinting is performed on bacteria using a method called whole genome sequencing (WGS).

WGS showed that bacteria from sick people's samples are closely related genetically. This suggests that people in this outbreak may have gotten sick from eating this food.

USDA-FSIS is working to identify the suppliers of deli meats, sliced at deli counters, purchased by people in this outbreak.

Public Health Actions

CDC advises people who are pregnant, aged 65 or older, or have a weakened immune system to contact their healthcare provider if they have any *Listeria* symptoms. Additionally, CDC advises people to take steps to protect themselves from getting *Listeria* from deli meats by avoiding eating meats sliced at the deli unless they are heated before eating."