

Multistate Outbreak of Salmonella Tennessee Infections, August 2006 - January 2007

Public health officials in multiple states, with the assistance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, are investigating a large outbreak of Salmonella Tennessee infections. As of February 14, 2007, 6PM EST, 288 persons with illness have been reported to CDC from 39 states; Alaska, Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Carolina, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin, and West Virginia.

State public health officials continue to investigate cases of illness. Among 120 patients for whom clinical information is available, 31 (26%) were hospitalized. There have been no reports of deaths attributed to this infection. Onset dates, which are known for 140 patients, ranged from August 1, 2006 to January 21, 2007. The outbreak has been prolonged and of low intensity, with 0-2 new cases reported daily in January nationwide. Two closely related DNA fingerprint patterns of Salmonella Tennessee isolates have been associated with this outbreak. DNA fingerprinting is routinely done at public health laboratories in all states as part of PulseNet (the network of public health laboratories that sub-type bacteria).

CDC is working with state and local health officials, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the Department of Agriculture (USDA) to determine the food responsible for this outbreak. Public health investigators have identified peanut butter as being consumed more often by ill persons than well persons and as statistically linked with illness. Evaluation of additional information about the brand of peanut butter, the consumption habits of cases, and the patterns of distribution of cases is ongoing. Health officials and the peanut butter industry representatives are working collaboratively to learn more about production of peanut butter to determine how it may have become contaminated.

Persons who think they may have become ill from eating peanut butter are advised to visit their health care provider and call their local health departments.

Most persons infected with Salmonella develop diarrhea, fever, and abdominal cramps 12 to 72 hours after infection. The illness usually lasts 4 to 7 days, and most persons recover without treatment. However, in some persons the diarrhea may be so severe that the patient needs to be hospitalized. The elderly, infants, and those with impaired immune systems are more likely to have a severe illness.

For more information on Salmonella infection and this outbreak, please refer to the following website: http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/submenus/sub_salmonella.htm

NOTE: The CDC HAN web site has been relocated. The link to the new site location is: <http://www2a.cdc.gov/HAN/>. If you maintain or contribute to a web site that links to the CDC HAN web site you should update the link. Also, to ensure the widest dissemination of this change, it would be appreciated if you would distribute this notification as appropriate. Thank you!

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.