

Two N.C. stillbirths lead to food warnings

December 20 2007

Two recent stillbirths in North Carolina have prompted health officials to issue a warning regarding the eating habits of pregnant women.

This month's stillbirths in Durham and Mecklenburg counties drove health officials to warn that eating foods such as cold cuts and soft cheeses could prove harmful to pregnant women, The News & Observer in Raleigh reported Wednesday.

Health officials said that by eating such foods, along with other items typically associated with contamination, pregnant women could be exposed to the bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes*.

The bacterium was found to have caused the two recent stillbirths in North Carolina, while a third woman was forced to have her baby early due to a related infection.

Each of the three cases involved women who recently ate soft cheeses purchased from different sources, leading to the general contamination warning.

Yet state epidemiologist downplayed those cases, along with a fourth suspected to be a case of listeriosis.

"Right now, what we have is four cases linked in time only," Dr. Jeff Engel told the newspaper. "It does not appear to be a widespread problem."

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