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Three dead in Dutch salmonella outbreak

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Three elderly people have died and the number of those sickened by salmonella after eating infected smoked salmon has risen to 950, Dutch health officials said Thursday.

"Three elderly people have died as a result of being infected by Salmonella Thompson. In total, some 950 people have now been taken ill as a result of the salmon, which have been taken off the shelves," said the National Institute for Public Health (RIVM) in the Netherlands.

Dutch food and consumer watchdog NVWA rang alarm bells earlier this month, pinning the outbreak on Dutch fish producer Foppen and advising all major Dutch supermarket chains to take the contaminated salmon off the shelves.

The RIVM added that around 100 people in the United States were also infected "by the same type of salmonella."

Foppen, headquartered in the central Dutch town of Harderwijk in the meantime blamed a contaminated production line in Greece for the outbreak, Dutch media reported.

Most people infected with salmonella develop diarrhoea, fever and abdominal cramps 12 to 72 hours after infection, according to the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website.

The illness usually lasts four to seven days and most people recover without treatment. However, for some, diarrhoea may be so severe that

the patient needs to be hospitalised, the CDC said.

A California-based company in April issued a recall of 58,828 pounds (26,683 kilograms)of a ground fish product known as "tuna scrape," imported to the United States from India, after a salmonella outbreak sickened 116 people.

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