

# Consumer reports says warnings about tainted beef don't go far enough

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(HealthDay)—To avoid possible E. coli infection, check your freezer

and toss out any ground beef bought in the United States between June 21 and July 11, food safety advocates advise.

Consumer Reports believes U.S. regulators didn't go far enough in their response to a deadly *E. coli* outbreak in Florida. The nonprofit urges [consumers](#) to be extra cautious before deciding to use [ground beef](#) tucked away in the freezer.

"*E. coli* O26 is quite serious. You don't want to risk your health, or your family's," said James Rogers, director of [food safety](#) testing and research at Consumer Reports.

The government last week said Cargill Meat Solutions was recalling more than 132,600 pounds of ground [beef](#) produced at its Fort Morgan, Colo., plant because of possible *E. coli* contamination.

*E. coli* bacteria can cause severe cramps, bloody diarrhea and vomiting. At least one person has died as a result of the recent outbreak and 17 more were sickened, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). Those sickened were in Florida, but the USDA advised that the recall involves [meat](#) that was shipped to other states.

Consumer Reports notes that much of the recalled meat, which had a use-by date of July 11, was sold in bulk to retailers who might have repackaged it for sale.

"If the meat has been repackaged, the brands and codes provided on the FSIS list so far won't help consumers figure out if their purchase was part of this ground beef recall," Rogers said in a news release from the nonprofit group.

"This, combined with the fact that people may take the meat out of its

packaging and wrap it themselves before they freeze it, means many consumers may have no way of knowing if they purchased affected Cargill beef, or know the use-by date that was on the original package," he added.

The USDA posted a list of meat brands involved in the recall, including the Excel, Fire River Farms, Our Certified, and Sterling Silver labels. But some affected brands are not yet on the government's recall list, Consumer Reports warns.

Cargill told Consumer Reports, however, that "the company has given all information on where the product was distributed to the USDA. The agency is in the process of posting the retail and food service distribution centers that received our product."

In response to Consumer Reports' concerns, government regulators reiterated the following guidance: "FSIS is concerned that some product may be frozen and in consumers' freezers. Consumers who have purchased these products are urged not to consume them. These products should be thrown away or returned to the place of purchase."

**More information:** The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides more on [E. coli](#).

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