

Three deaths linked to listeria-tainted milkshakes from restaurant in Washington state

August 22 2023, by Cara Murez



A strain of listeria bacteria found in milkshakes at a restaurant in Washington state has been linked to six hospitalizations and three deaths.

The milkshakes were sold at Frugals [restaurant](#) in Tacoma, Wash.

Only the Tacoma site of Frugals, a small fast-food chain in Washington and Montana, appears to have been affected, according to the Washington State Department of Health.

Investigators found listeria in the ice cream machines, which were not cleaned correctly, health officials said. The restaurant had stopped using its ice cream machines on Aug. 8, but it can take up to 70 days for a person to develop listeria symptoms.

People who are age 65 and older, have weakened immune systems or who are pregnant should call their [health care provider](#) if they had a Frugals Tacoma milkshake between May 29 and Aug. 7 and have symptoms of listeria.

Most people who eat listeria-contaminated food will not become seriously ill, but it can be dangerous for risk groups.

The infection can be treated with antibiotics.

Symptoms of listeria illness include fever, muscle aches and tiredness.

Affected [pregnant women](#) may also get a headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance or seizures.

Listeria can cause pregnancy loss. It may also lead to [premature birth](#) or serious illness or death in newborns.

Frugals Tacoma posted a statement Aug. 19 on its Instagram page. It said

customers' trust was paramount and that it was cooperating with the investigation.

"We are heartbroken and deeply regret any harm our actions could have caused," the statement said.

Through genetic fingerprinting, health investigators found that the bacteria in this outbreak is same strain of [listeria](#) that hospitalized six people between Feb. 27 and July 22 in Washington's Pierce and Thurston counties. Three of those people died.

Two people who were hospitalized but survived said they consumed Frugals Tacoma milkshakes before becoming ill. All six of those sickened had conditions that made their immune systems less able to fight disease, [health officials](#) said.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on [listeria](#).

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