

E. coli outbreak tied to raw milk cheese

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Raw milk cheese tainted with E. coli bacteria has sickened 10 people in four states, hospitalizing four, federal regulators warn.

The cases have been tied to Raw Farm brand raw cheddar cheese, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in a [food safety alert](#).

Six of the patients remembered which type of raw cheese they ate, and all reported consuming the Raw Farm cheddar.

Gene sequencing of E. coli bacteria found in the tainted products also showed they are all closely related, meaning that people involved in this outbreak likely share a common source of infection, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

No deaths have been reported. One patient developed hemolytic uremic syndrome, a condition affecting the small blood vessels of the kidneys that can lead to kidney failure.

Of the 10 reported infections, four occurred in California, three in Colorado, one in Texas and two in Utah, officials said.

Raw Farm has agreed to recall certain lots of its raw cheddar cheese, the FDA and CDC said. These include block and shredded cheese in original flavor and jalapeno flavor.

Patients remember buying the cheese at Sprouts Farmers Market and Bristol Farms, but there may be other retailers selling tainted Raw Farms products, the FDA said in a [recall announcement](#).

The FDA recommends checking refrigerators and freezers for Raw Farms raw cheddar cheese and throwing it all out. Carefully clean or sanitize any surfaces or containers that the cheese touched.

Most people infected with E. coli experience severe stomach cramps, diarrhea and vomiting, the CDC said. Symptoms usually start a few days after exposure.

Raw milk [cheese](#) is made from milk that has not been pasteurized, the process of heating milk to kill off harmful germs, the CDC explained.

All raw milk and raw milk products are risky, the agency warned.

Raw milk can become contaminated by animal feces or skin, or from germs present in the barn or milking equipment, the CDC said. Without pasteurization, those germs can make their way to consumers.

"The use of good hygiene practices on the [farm](#) can reduce, but cannot eliminate, the chance of milk getting contaminated," the CDC said.

"Even healthy animals may carry germs that can contaminate milk," the agency website added. "Small numbers of bacteria can multiply and grow in milk from the time it is collected until the time a person drinks it. If the [milk](#) is not pasteurized to kill germs, people who drink it can get sick."

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

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