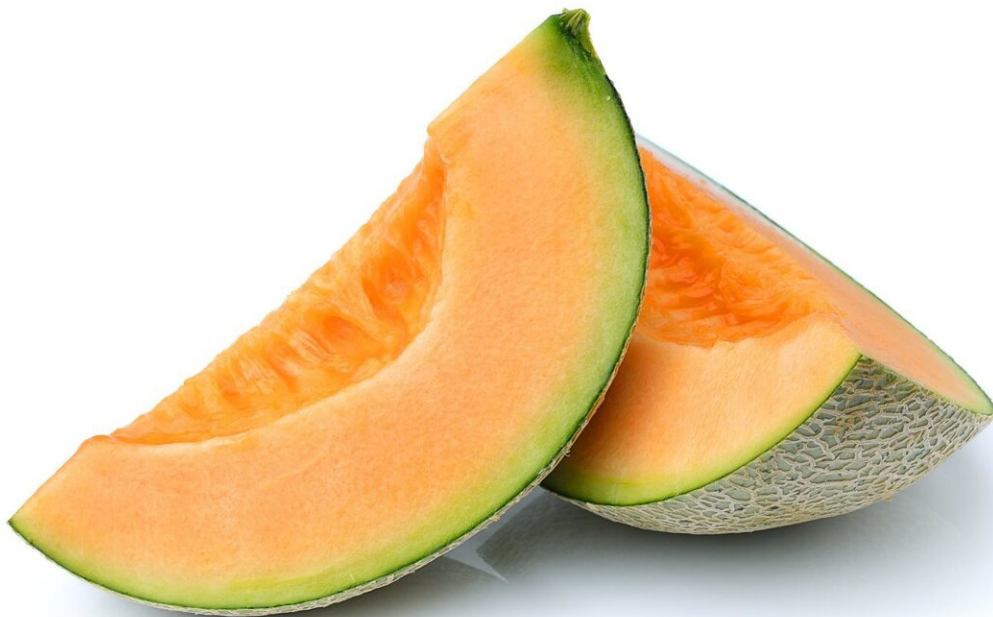


# Watchdog group says US food recalls rose again last year

April 25 2024, by Ernie Mundell

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U.S. recalls of foods for salmonella, foreign objects or undeclared allergens are rampant nowadays and the highest they've been since 2020, a watchdog group warns.

"Everyone needs to do better: [food producers](#), regulators and lawmakers," said Teresa Murray, consumer watchdog at U.S. Public Interest Research Group (PIRG). "We shouldn't have to worry that everything from soup to nuts could land us in the hospital."

Many folks may have heard of the recalls over the past six months of salmonella-tainted [cantaloupes](#) or lead-laden kids' [applesauce](#) pouches.

But those were only the most high-profile of hundreds of recalls announced over the same time period, PIRG said.

Half of those recalls were linked to undeclared allergens in food products that could threaten the lives of folks with [food allergies](#). Allergen-linked recalls in 2023 were 27% more frequent than in 2022, PIRG noted.

Some of that rise may be linked to new rules that mandated that sesame—a common [allergen](#)—must now be disclosed in food labeling, the [advocacy group](#) said.

Another quarter of recalls happened because of listeria, [salmonella](#), E. coli or contamination from other dangerous bacteria, PIRG said.

There was one piece of good news: Recalls based on foreign objects (glass, plastic or metal) making their way into foods dropped by 40% from 2022 to 2023.

Still, "most problems with food should be easy to avoid," Murray added in a PIRG news release. "Food producers and packagers just need to focus more on cleanliness and disclose allergens that could make people sick or kill them. We should not have to worry about finding shards of metal and plastic or undeclared allergens in the food on our plates."

"It's baffling that manufacturers aren't properly inspecting equipment, testing food and properly labeling packages before they end up on grocery store shelves."

Recalls of meat and poultry rose by 31% compared to 2022, PIRG added.

All of this means more sick people, with illnesses so severe they could potentially kill.

"There's a decent chance that you or someone close to you has become ill from food poisoning the last few years yet didn't realize it unless the sickness was bad enough to see a doctor," Murray said. "Food safety is really important. Contaminated cantaloupe, onions and peaches killed people last year and a wide variety of foods made more than 1,100 people sick."

**More information:** Find out more about food recalls at the [U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service](#).

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