

Untreated water tied to salmonella outbreak in cucumbers that sickened 450 people in US

July 3 2024, by Jonel Aleccia



This undated photo provided by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration shows cucumbers in Florida recalled for salmonella. Untreated water used by Bedner Growers Inc. of Boynton Beach, Fla., is one likely source of salmonella food poisoning that sickened nearly 450 people across the U.S. this spring, federal health officials said Tuesday, July 2, 2024. Credit: FDA via AP, File

Untreated water used by a Florida cucumber grower is one likely source of [salmonella food poisoning](#) that sickened nearly 450 people across the U.S. this spring, federal health officials said Tuesday.

But that grower doesn't account for all of the cucumber-related illnesses and 125 hospitalizations that were reported from late March through early June, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said.

Salmonella found in untreated canal water used by Bedner Growers Inc. of Boynton Beach, Florida, matched a strain of the bacteria that caused some of the illnesses in reported in more than 30 states and Washington, D.C. Additional types of [salmonella](#) were detected in soil and [water samples](#) collected at the site, FDA officials said.

Bedner Growers supplied Fresh Start Produce Sales of Delray Beach, Florida, which recalled crates of cucumbers in late May after the first illnesses were reported. Bedner Growers also supplied cucumbers to multiple places where ill people reported buying or eating the produce, FDA said.

The canal water was not applied to edible parts of the cucumber plants, but was used for subsoil watering, said Bedner Growers' owner Steve Bedner. He added that it complies with federal rules and is "a common industry practice."

Investigators originally said there were two outbreaks of salmonella possibly tied to cucumbers, but combined them into one because of several similarities, including the timing and the type of food. Nearly 70% of sick people interviewed reported eating cucumbers before they fell ill, the FDA said. The investigation is continuing.

Bedner Growers' cucumber growing and harvesting season is over. There

is no product from the farm remaining on the market, the FDA said, so there's likely no ongoing risk to the public.

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