

Five more deaths in listeria outbreak tied to Boar's Head deli meats

August 29 2024, by Robin Foster



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

The death toll from listeria linked to tainted Boar's Head deli meats has risen to eight, with five more fatalities reported Wednesday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Deaths have now occurred in Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New Mexico, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia.

Cases of bacterial illness tied to the recalled meats continue to mount.

"Since the last update on August 8, 2024, 14 more illnesses have been reported bringing the total to 57," the CDC said in an [update](#). "All 57 people have been hospitalized."

It's now the largest listeria outbreak reported in the United States since one linked to tainted cantaloupes in 2011, the agency added.

Some of the suspect products could still be in family refrigerators, since some of the products had sell dates stretching into October.

"Everyone should check their homes for any remaining recalled Boar's Head products since they can have long a shelf-life," the CDC said.

"Look for 'EST. 12612' or 'P-12612' inside the USDA mark of inspection on the product labels."

On July 30, the recall of Boars Head deli meats broadened to include an additional 7 million pounds of products because they may also have been contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes* bacteria.

The [expanded recall](#) is part of an ongoing investigation of ready-to-eat foods made at the company's Jarratt, Va. plant.

According to CBS News, records released by the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) showed 69 instances of "noncompliance" noted by the agency at the Jarratt plant over the past year.

According to the FSIS records, mold and mildew were found at sinks used by plant employees to wash their hands, on the outside of steel vats,

and in holding coolers between the site's smokehouses.

In other spots around the plant, pooling or leaking water was seen, including one puddle with "a green algal growth" and condensation found to be "dripping over product being held," CBS News reported.

Beyond that, in February FSIS inspectors noted "ample amounts of blood in puddles on the floor" and a "rancid smell" in a cooler used at the plant.

Insect infestations—flies, "gnat like insects" and "ants traveling down the wall," a beetle and a cockroach—were all observed by inspectors at the Jarratt plant in June.

In a statement, a Boar's Head spokesperson told CBS News that the company deeply regrets the impact of the recall, and said that said [food safety](#) is their "absolute priority."

"As a USDA-inspected food producer, the agency has inspectors in our Jarratt, Virginia plant every day and if at any time inspectors identify something that needs to be addressed, our team does so immediately, as was the case with each and every issue raised by USDA in this report," company spokesperson Elizabeth Ward said.

According to the CDC, "Listeria is especially harmful to people who are pregnant, aged 65 or older, or with weakened immune systems," the agency said in a news release. "[The] CDC always recommends people at higher risk for listeriosis avoid eating meats sliced at the deli or heat them to an internal temperature of 165°F or until steaming hot before eating."

The [expanded recall](#) now includes 71 products made between May 10 and July 29 under the Boar's Head and Old Country brand names. The

newly recalled items include meat to be sliced at delis and some packaged meat and poultry products sold in stores. Liverwurst, ham, beef salami, bologna and other products are affected.

The listeria investigation was [first announced](#) July 22 by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

At the time, the source or sources of the outbreak were unknown.

As FSIS explained, testing first performed in Maryland spotted a sample of Boar's Head liverwurst product contaminated with listeria.

Besides the liverwurst products, some of the other Boar's Head meats that have been included in the recall include certain lots of Virginia Ham/Old Fashioned Ham, Italian Cappy Style Ham, various types of bologna and beef salami, among others.

"The ready-to-eat liverwurst products were produced between June 11, 2024, and July 17, 2024, and have a 44-day shelf life," FSIS noted. Products were shipped to retailers nationwide.

If consumers find they have any of the recalled products in their fridges, they should discard them or return them to the place of purchase.

"Consumers who have purchased these products are also urged to clean refrigerators thoroughly to prevent the risk of cross-contamination," FSIS added.

Deli owners who find they have the products "should clean and sanitize all food and non-food surfaces and discard any open meats and cheeses in the deli," the agency added.

Listeria bacteria can cause [listeriosis](#), the third-leading cause of death

from food-borne illness in the United States. Symptoms typically include a fever, muscle aches and fatigue. Infection may also cause a headache, a stiff neck, confusion or seizures. Pregnant women may experience pregnancy loss or premature birth.

More information: Find out more about listeriosis at the [CDC](#).

© 2024 [HealthDay](#). All rights reserved.

Citation: Five more deaths in listeria outbreak tied to Boar's Head deli meats (2024, August 29) retrieved 29 August 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-08-deaths-listeria-outbreak-boar-deli.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.