

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



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EHS Circular Letter 2014-23

TO: Local Directors of Health
Certified Food Inspectors
Chief Sanitarians

FROM: Tracey Weeks, MS, RS
Coordinator, Food Protection Program

DATE: May 23, 2014

SUBJECT: **Recall of Beef Products**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) announced on May 19, 2014 that the Wolverine Packing Company, a Detroit, Michigan establishment, is recalling approximately 1.8 million pounds of ground beef products that may be contaminated with *E. coli* O157:H7. This recall was initiated as a result of a traceback conducted as part of an outbreak investigation that implicated the beef products from Wolverine Packing Company. The USDA recall notice is attached.

The distribution list provided by USDA did **not** include Connecticut. However, since that time we were informed by Massachusetts DPH that the product was sold to 2 Connecticut food service establishments. Those local health departments were notified and they promptly contacted the respective food establishments.

Today it was learned that the recalled product was distributed by US Foods to a commissary in Connecticut although this information is not on the USDA distribution list. As a result of this most recent information, this notice is being sent to all local health departments in case you receive calls regarding these products. The list of recalled products is extensive and therefore best accessed through the USDA website. <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/3a3ed84a-f07f-4cb5-b321-b07ddb9d650/recall-030-2014-products.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>.

The CDC website provides details on the related outbreak investigation <http://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/2014/O157H7-05-14/index.html>.

Consumers should be advised to contact their physicians if they experience symptoms. Illness information for consumers from DPH is attached and can also be accessed at the CDC website at <http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3136&q=388280>.

Please share with food establishments as appropriate.

cc: Suzanne Blancaflor, M.S., M.P.H., Chief, Environmental Health Section
Ellen Blaschinski, R.S., M.B.A., Chief, Regulatory Services Branch
Frank Greene, Director, Food & Standards Division, Department of Consumer Protection



If you require aid or accommodation to participate fully and fairly in this meeting, please phone (860) 509-7293

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Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employee

News Release

Michigan Firm Recalls Ground Beef Products Due To Possible E. Coli O157:H7

Class I Recall 030-2014

Health Risk: High May 19, 2014

Distribution List PDF (/wps/wcm/connect/7baf92e6-d643-47d0-949e-4e6a621bc2af/RC-030-2014-Retail-List.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CONVERT_TO=url&CACHEID=7baf92e6-d643-47d0-949e-4e6a621bc2af)

[En Español \(?1dmy¤t=true&urile=wcm%3apath%3a%2Ffsis-content%2Finternet%2Finformational%2Fen-espanol%2Fnoticiasucesos%2Favisos-de-alerta-sobre-salud-publica%2Farchive%2F2014%2Frc-030-2014-sp\)](#)

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EDITOR'S NOTE added on May 19, 2014: Upon further investigation, FSIS now believes the product was sent to distribution centers nationwide.

EDITOR'S NOTE added on May 21, 2014: The illness onset date has been corrected to May 8, 2014.

EDITOR'S NOTE added on May 23, 2014: FSIS was notified of the first illness on May 8, 2014. This date was corrected from May 12, 2014 in the initial release.

WASHINGTON, May, 19, 2014 – Wolverine Packing Company, a Detroit, Mich. establishment, is recalling approximately 1.8 million pounds of ground beef products that may be contaminated with *E. coli* O157:H7, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) announced today.

The ground beef products were produced between March 31, 2014 and April 18, 2014. For a [full list of products that were recalled](/wps/wcm/connect/3a3ed84a-f07f-4cb5-b321-b07ddba9d650/recall-030-2014-products.pdf?MOD=AJPERES) (</wps/wcm/connect/3a3ed84a-f07f-4cb5-b321-b07ddba9d650/recall-030-2014-products.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>) please see the attached document.

The products subject to recall bear the establishment number "EST. 2574B" and will have a production date code in the format "Packing Nos: MM DD 14" between "03 31 14" and "04 18 14." These products were shipped to distributors for restaurant and retail use nationwide. There was no distribution of the products to the Department of Defense, the National School Lunch Program or catalog/internet sales.

Factors that can contribute to the size of the recall include potential contamination of additional products due to a lack of microbiological independence between lots in a production day, as well as a deficiency in supportive record-keeping by distributors.

FSIS was notified of *E. coli* O157:H7 illnesses on May 8, 2014. Working in conjunction with public health partners from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), FSIS determined through a traceback investigation that there is a link between the ground beef products from Wolverine Packing Company and this illness cluster. Based on epidemiological and traceback investigations, 11 case-patients have been identified in 4 states with illness onset dates ranging from April 22, 2014 to May 2, 2014. Additional information may be found on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, <http://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/2014/O157H7-05-14/index.html> (<http://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/2014/O157H7-05-14/index.html>). FSIS continues to work with our state and federal public health partners on this investigation and provide updated information as it becomes available.

E. coli O157:H7 is a potentially deadly bacterium that can cause dehydration, bloody diarrhea and abdominal cramps 2–8 days (3–4 days, on average) after exposure the organism. While most people recover within a week, some develop a type of kidney failure called hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). This condition can occur among persons of any age but is most common in children under 5-years old and older adults. It is marked by easy bruising, pallor, and decreased urine output. Persons who experience these symptoms should seek emergency medical care immediately.

FSIS routinely conducts recall effectiveness checks to verify recalling firms notify their customers of the recall and that steps are taken to make certain that the product is no longer available to consumers. When available, the retail distribution list will be posted on the FSIS website at www.fsis.usda.gov/recalls (<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/recalls>).

FSIS advises all consumers to safely prepare their raw meat products, including fresh and frozen, and only consume ground beef that has been cooked to a temperature of 160° F. The only way to confirm that ground beef is cooked to a temperature high enough to kill harmful bacteria is to use a food thermometer that measures internal temperature, <http://1.usa.gov/1cDxcDQ> (<http://1.usa.gov/1cDxcDQ>).

Media with questions regarding the recall can contact Chuck Sanger, Spokesperson, Wolverine Packing Company, at (262) 563-5118 and consumers can call (800) 521-1390. Consumers with food safety questions can "Ask Karen," the FSIS virtual representative available 24 hours a day at AskKaren.gov (<http://AskKaren.gov>) or via smartphone at m.AskKaren.gov (<http://m.AskKaren.gov>). The toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854) is available in English and Spanish and can be reached from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Eastern Time) Monday through Friday. Recorded food safety messages are available 24 hours a day. The online Electronic Consumer Complaint Monitoring System can be accessed 24 hours a day at: <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/reportproblem> (<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/reportproblem>).

PREPARING PRODUCT FOR SAFE CONSUMPTION

USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline

1-888-MPHOTLINE or visit

www.fsis.usda.gov (<http://www.fsis.usda.gov>)

Wash hands with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling raw meat and poultry. Wash cutting boards, dishes and utensils with hot, soapy water. Immediately clean spills.

Keep raw meat, fish and poultry away from other food that will not be cooked. Use separate cutting boards for raw meat, poultry and egg products and cooked foods.

Color is NOT a reliable indicator that meat has been cooked to a temperature high enough to kill harmful bacteria.

The only way to be sure the meat or poultry is cooked to a high enough temperature to kill harmful bacteria is to use a thermometer to measure the internal temperature.

Fish: 145°F

Beef, pork, lamb chops/steaks/roasts: 145°F with a three minute rest time

Ground meat: 160°F

Poultry: 165°F

Hot dogs: 160°F or steaming hot

Refrigerate raw meat and poultry within two hours after purchase or one hour if temperatures exceed 90° F. Refrigerate cooked meat and poultry within two hours after cooking.

USDA Recall Classifications	
Class I	This is a health hazard situation where there is a reasonable probability that the use of the product will cause serious, adverse health consequences or death.

Class II	This is a health hazard situation where there is a remote probability of adverse health consequences from the use of the product.
Class III	This is a situation where the use of the product will not cause adverse health consequences.

Last Modified May 23, 2014



E. coli

Infectious Disease Section • MAY 2014

What are Shiga toxin-producing strains of *Escherichia coli*?

Escherichia coli (*E. coli*) is a bacterium. Although most strains of this bacterium are harmless, some strains produce a powerful toxin that can cause illness. These strains are called Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC). The most common STEC strain in North America is *E. coli* O157:H7.

Where are STEC bacteria found?

STEC bacteria are normally found in the intestines of cattle; however, other animals such as deer may also carry STEC.

How do these bacteria spread?

Because these bacteria are normally found in cattle, contamination of meat (especially ground beef) may occur during the slaughtering process. Eating contaminated meat that has not been thoroughly cooked can cause illness. In addition, outbreaks have been associated with consuming raw milk, unpasteurized apple cider, contaminated water, sprouts, lettuce, salami, and venison. Transmission also occurs directly from person-to-person, especially in families and in high-risk settings like daycare centers.

Who gets STEC infections?

Although anyone can get infected, the highest infection rates are in children less than 5 years of age. The elderly are also at increased risk for infection.

What are the symptoms?

Typical symptoms can include abdominal cramping, watery diarrhea, frequently bloody, vomiting, and a low-grade fever. Symptoms usually resolve over several days. Some individuals may experience no symptoms at all. The infection can cause a serious complication known as hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), especially in young children, in which the red blood cells are destroyed and the kidneys fail. Adults may also develop a similar complication along with neurologic symptoms, known as thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura (TTP). These complications can occur in up to 10% of cases.

How soon do symptoms appear?

The symptoms generally appear 3 to 4 days after the exposure (range 2 – 8 days).

Should an infected person be excluded from school or work?

Young children in day-care settings known to have STEC should be removed from the day-care facility until two consecutive stool specimens have tested negative. School-aged children who have recovered from their illness may attend school. Persons who are employed as food handlers, health care workers, or childcare providers should also be excluded until they have two negative stool specimens.

What is the treatment for STEC?

Most people recover without any specific treatment. There is no evidence that antibiotic treatment is helpful. Antidiarrheal agents are also not recommended. Severe complications, such as HUS, usually require hospitalization.

How can STEC infections be prevented?

- Cook ground beef thoroughly. Ground beef should be cooked to a temperature of 160 degrees F. If a thermometer is not used, the beef should be cooked until the meat is no longer pink and juices run clear.
- Do not consume raw milk or unpasteurized dairy products.
- Avoid unpasteurized juices.
- Wash your hands after using the bathroom or changing diapers and before preparing or eating food.
- Do not drink or swallow water in lakes, ponds, or streams.
- Prevent cross contamination in food preparation areas by thoroughly washing hands, counters, cutting boards, and utensils after they touch raw meat. Never place cooked hamburgers or ground beef on the unwashed plate that held raw patties. Wash meat thermometers in between tests of patties that require further cooking.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables thoroughly, especially those that will not be cooked – even if they will be peeled.
- Wash your hands immediately after contact with animals (especially cattle) or their environment when visiting farms or petting zoos.

This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. If you have any questions about the disease described above or think that you may have this infection, consult a health care provider.