



DALLAS COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
EPIDEMIOLOGY

Zachary Thompson
Director

Dr. Christopher Perkins
Health Authority/ Medical Director

From: Michelle Ward, MPH, Epidemiologist
Wendy Chung, MD, Chief Epidemiologist

To: Dallas County Medical Providers, Hospital Infection Preventionists

Date: April 9, 2015

HEALTH ADVISORY: LISTERIOSIS

Three cases of listeriosis in Texas have been confirmed to be part of a multistate outbreak of *Listeria monocytogenes* which are related to Blue Bell ice cream products.^{1, 2} These cases were diagnosed in Texas between 2011 and 2014. No cases related to this outbreak have yet been confirmed in residents of Dallas County. Physicians should continue to be aware of public health recommendations that consumers not eat any of the following Blue Bell Creameries products:

- All products made at an Oklahoma plant, which can be identified by the letters “O,” “P,” “Q,” “R,” “S,” and “T” following the “code date” printed on the bottom of the product package.
- Additional recalled or withdrawn Blue Bell products listed on the FDA and CDC websites.^{2,3}

Symptoms can develop from 2 to 70 days after ingestion of foods contaminated with *Listeria*, and can range from mild non-invasive gastroenteritis to severe invasive disease. Symptoms of invasive listeriosis (bacteremia or CNS infection) typically include fever, myalgia and headache, often preceded by gastrointestinal symptoms, such as diarrhea, nausea, or vomiting.

Listeriosis should be considered in the differential diagnosis of patients with compatible symptoms of invasive illness, particularly those who report possible exposure to the implicated ice cream products. Diagnosis requires isolation of *Listeria* by culture from blood or CSF. Stool cultures are not recommended as a screening tool for *Listeria*.

Antimicrobial treatment is **not** indicated for non-invasive gastroenteritis in healthy, non high-risk persons. Most healthy adults and children with infection will experience mild to moderate self-limited symptoms. However, suspected **invasive infections** should be treated empirically with antimicrobials. Persons at higher risk for severe infection include: pregnant women, persons >60 years of age, and persons with weakened immune systems. In pregnant women, listeria can cause miscarriage and severe illness in newborns, although the mother may not be seriously ill.

Please be aware of clinical guidance from CDC and ACOG to assist with medical management of persons at greater risk for invasive listeriosis who report possible exposure to *Listeria*.^{4,5} This guidance provides framework for managing high risk persons who may be asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic but does not alter current practices for persons with suspected invasive listeriosis.

For questions or to report a suspected case, please contact Dallas County Health and Human Services at (214) 819-2004. Thank you.

- 1) CDC Investigation update (4/9/15): <http://www.cdc.gov/listeria/outbreaks/ice-cream-03-15/index.html>
- 2) FDA Investigation (4/8/15): <http://www.fda.gov/Food/RecallsOutbreaksEmergencies/Outbreaks/ucm438104.htm>
- 3) Recalled Products (4/9/15): <http://www.cdc.gov/listeria/outbreaks/ice-cream-03-15/advice-consumers.html>
- 4) Medical Management (April 2014): <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/listeriosis/mgmt.pdf>
- 5) ACOG (Dec 2014): <http://www.acog.org/Resources-And-Publications/Committee-Opinions/Committee-on-Obstetric-Practice/Management-of-Pregnant-Women-With-Presumptive-Exposure-to-Listeria-monocytogenes>