

Center for Policy, Planning
and Evaluation

Division of Epidemiology, Disease Surveillance and Investigation

November 20, 2018

Health Notice for District of Columbia Health Care Providers

Multistate Outbreak of Multidrug-Resistant *Salmonella* Infections Linked to Raw Turkey Products

SUMMARY

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and public health and regulatory officials in several states are investigating a multistate outbreak of multidrug-resistant *Salmonella* infections linked to raw turkey products. As of November 5, 2018, 164 people have been reported as being infected with the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Reading from 35 states¹. Epidemiologic and laboratory evidence indicates that raw turkey products from a variety of sources are contaminated with *Salmonella* Reading and are causing illness. The outbreak strain has been identified in samples taken from raw turkey pet food, raw turkey products, and live turkeys. Several cases of *Salmonella* among DC residents are currently being investigated by the District of Columbia Department of Health (DC Health).

Given the current outbreak, DC Health advises healthcare facilities to consistently ask patients presenting with symptoms consistent with *Salmonella* about consumption of turkey or products containing turkey, collect stool specimens for laboratory testing and submission to the DC Public Health Laboratory (DC PHL), and promptly report cases to DC Health to ensure appropriate follow-up and investigation.

Background

CDC estimates *Salmonella* causes about 1.2 million illnesses, 23,000 hospitalizations, and 450 deaths in the United States every year². Food is the source for about 1 million of these illnesses. Most people infected with *Salmonella* develop diarrhea (may be bloody), fever, and stomach cramps 12 to 72 hours after being exposed to the bacteria. People may also develop nausea, vomiting, and headache, though these symptoms are less common. The illness usually lasts 4–7 days. Most people recover without treatment, however, in some people, the diarrhea can result in severe dehydration requiring hospitalization, particularly in children under 2 years old and adults over 65 years old. Even after clinical symptoms resolve, *Salmonella* may be found in the stool for several weeks. Sometimes, *Salmonella* infection can spread to urine, blood, bones, joints, the brain, or the nervous system. Some of these extra-intestinal infections can have long-term effects, depending on which part of the body is infected.

The outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Reading is present in live turkeys and in many types of raw turkey products, indicating it might be widespread in the turkey industry. Although **a single, common supplier of raw turkey products or of live turkeys has not been identified that could entirely account for the current outbreak**, on November 15, 2018, Jennie-O Turkey Store Sales, LLC, in Barron, Wisconsin [recalled](#) approximately 91,388 pounds of raw ground turkey products. The recalled ground turkey was sold in one-pound packages labeled with establishment number “P-190” (found inside the USDA mark of inspection). More information about the outbreak can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/reading-07-18/index.html>.

Recommendations

Reporting

- All patients who test positive for *Salmonella* should be reported to the DC Health Division of Epidemiology—Disease Surveillance and Investigation by submitting a **Notifiable Disease and Condition Case Report Form** online using the DC Reporting and Surveillance Center (DCRC).
 - The form can be accessed at: <https://dchealth.dc.gov/service/infectious-diseases>.
 - When available, details about recent turkey consumption can be noted in the form.

Laboratory Testing

- A stool sample should be collected for laboratory testing from patients presenting with diarrheal illness and who report recent turkey consumption.
- All diarrheal samples that test positive for *Salmonella sp.* should be submitted to the DC PHL for further characterization.
- Isolates are preferred, however the DC PHL will accept stool in Cary-Blair as a preservative.
- All specimens being submitted to the DC PHL for testing **must** be accompanied by a DC PHL Test Request Form and an External Chain of Custody form, found [here](#).
- Once specimens and forms are **ready to be submitted** to the DC PHL:
 - Acute care hospital laboratories should submit samples via the standard DC PHL courier that comes to your facility.
 - Other healthcare facilities should request a DC PHL courier pick-up at their facility by sending an email to DC.PHL@dc.gov.
- For questions regarding sample collection and preparation, contact Matthew McCarroll at (202) 727-6929 during normal business hours (8:30am – 5:00pm, Monday - Friday). For emergency situations outside of normal business hours, please call the DC PHL at (202) 868-6561.

Treatment

Antibiotics are recommended only for patients who:

- Have a serious illness (such as severe diarrhea, high fever, bloodstream infection, or condition requiring hospitalization).
- Are considered at high risk for serious disease or complications (such as infants, adults over 65 years old, and people with weakened immune systems).

References

1. “Outbreak of Multidrug-Resistant *Salmonella* Infections Linked to Raw Turkey Products,” <https://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/reading-07-18/index.html>
2. *Salmonella*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/index.html>

Please contact the DC Health Division of Epidemiology–Disease Surveillance and Investigation at:
Phone: 202-442-5893 (8:15am-4:45pm) | 844-493-2652 (after-hours calls)
Fax: 202-442-8060 | Email: foodborne.epi@dc.gov