



County of Erie

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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HEALTH ADVISORY # 229

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OUTBREAK OF INFECTIONS CAUSED BY SALMONELLA SEROTYPE TYPHIMURIUM

Please distribute immediately to the Infection Control Department, Emergency Department, Employee Health Service, Infectious Disease Department, Director of Nursing, Medical Director, Laboratory Service, Director of Food and Nutritional Services, and all acute and primary care patient areas.

SUMMARY

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported an ongoing multi-state outbreak of human *Salmonella* serotype Typhimurium infections.
- The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) has identified 17 cases (Onondaga 3, Erie 2, Suffolk 2, Broome 1, Cattaraugus 1, Madison 1, Monroe 1, Nassau 1, Ontario 1, St. Lawrence 1, Steuben 1, Tioga 1, Wyoming 1), all of whom match the multi-state outbreak pattern by pulse-field gel electrophoresis (PFGE).
- The NYSDOH is asking providers to consider *Salmonella* in the differential diagnosis of patients with diarrhea, obtain a food history for the 72 hours prior to symptom onset, and order stool cultures.
- Report all confirmed cases of *Salmonella* within 24 hours to the local health department where the patient resides.

BACKGROUND

The NYSDOH is collaborating with the CDC, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Safety Inspection Service, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to investigate an ongoing multi-state outbreak of PFGE-matching *Salmonella* Typhimurium infections.

As of January 9, 2009, 399 persons have been identified as infected with the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Typhimurium in 42 states. Reported illnesses began between September 3 and December 29, 2008, and patients range in age from <1 to 98 years. Among those reported with available information, 18% were hospitalized and no deaths have been directly attributed to the outbreak.

In New York State (NYS), a total of 17 cases with a matching PFGE pattern have been identified with reported onsets ranging from September 28 through December 21, 2008. The New York patients range in age from 2 to 62 years and five cases have been hospitalized.

To date, there is no confirmed vehicle and the nationwide epidemiologic investigation has not identified any commonalities. In Minnesota, peanut butter has been implicated as a potential source of the outbreak and certain lots of peanut butter have been voluntarily recalled by the manufacturer. However, CDC has not confirmed that peanut butter is the source of this nationwide outbreak. The investigation is ongoing, further analytic study is being conducted by the CDC, and results of this analysis are pending.

EPIDEMIOLOGY OF *SALMONELLA* INFECTIONS

Most persons infected with *Salmonella* develop diarrhea, fever, and abdominal cramps 12 to 72 hours after infection. The illness usually lasts 4 to 7 days and most persons recover without treatment. However, in some persons the diarrhea may be so severe that the patient needs to be hospitalized. The elderly, infants, and those with impaired immune systems are more likely to have severe illness. When severe infection occurs, *Salmonella* may spread from the intestines to the bloodstream and then to other body sites and can cause death unless the person is treated promptly with antibiotics.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS AND LABORATORIES

NYSDOH is asking providers to consider *Salmonella* in the differential diagnosis for patients who present with diarrhea. Providers should obtain and document a food history for the 72 hours prior to symptom onset and order appropriate stool cultures. All confirmed cases of salmonellosis in patients should be reported within 24 hours to the local health department where the patient resides.

Laboratories should send all *Salmonella* isolates to the NYSDOH Wadsworth Center or New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC DOHMH) Public Health Laboratory for confirmation, serotyping, and PFGE testing.

If you have questions regarding *Salmonella*, please contact the Erie County Department of Health at (716) 858-7697, Monday thru Friday, 8:30am to 9:00pm.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information about *Salmonella* or the *Salmonella* Typhimurium outbreak can be found on the CDC website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/>

Health Category Definitions:

Health Alert FLASH: conveys the highest level of importance due to a large-scale, catastrophic public health emergency; warrants immediate action or attention

Health Alert Priority: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention to a health problem or situation

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary