

For Health Professionals

Health Alerts

Health Advisory #82 - Salmonella Enteritidis Outbreak Linked to Raw Almonds - May 25, 2004

On May 12, 2004, the Oregon Department of Human Services State Health Division identified five cases of Salmonella serotype Enteritidis (SE) infections. In the five days before illness, all patients had consumed raw almonds produced by Paramount Farms and sold under the Kirkland Signature label through Costco stores. The link between illness and consumption of raw almonds was statistically significant.

Ages of case-patients range from 11 months to 91 years with illness onset dates from June 2003 to April 2004. Of sixteen patients with known medical data, 5 were hospitalized and no one died. SE isolates from 2004 continue to be analyzed and case finding is ongoing. Of the 18 patients interviewed to date, seventeen give a history of consuming raw almonds within a few days before illness onset. The remaining case is an infant who was likely infected by secondary transmission within the household.

On the evening of May 18, at the request of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Paramount Farms issued a recall of whole natural raw almonds sold under the Kirkland Signature, Trader Joe's, and Sunkist brands. Recalled raw almonds from the Kirkland Signature brand, available exclusively at Costco Wholesale Inc. and sold in 3-pound bags, have "best before" dates of 8/21/04 through 2/8/05. Recalled almonds from the Trader Joe's and Sunkist brands have "best before" dates of 8/21/04 through 3/15/05. Details regarding the recall can be found at http://www.fda.gov/oc/po/firmrecalls/paramount05_04.html. The distribution of these almonds is considered to be nationwide.

For more information about Salmonella Enteriditis:
http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/salment_g.htm

Clinicians should report cases to the Erie County Department of Health, Bureau of Disease Control at: (716) 858-7697 (Monday - Friday, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM) or (716) 898-4225 (Weekends, evenings, and holidays).