Salmonella Typhimurium

April 6, 2012

Key Messages:

Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health is warning the public, distributors and food service establishments not to consume, sell, serve or use a beef burger meat mix produced by Intercity Packers (East) in Mississauga because the product may be contaminated with Salmonella.

The affected product, Intercity Packers Ltd brand Beef Burger Meat Mix 80/20, is sold in 5 kg cases (each containing 2 x 2.5 kg units) bearing UPC 90066172180172 and lot code 046. The affected product can be identified by the Establishment number (EST) 503 that appears on the outer cases. The packages inside the case do not carry any label.

This product has been distributed to commercial and public food service establishments in Ontario. It has not been distributed to retail establishments in the province.

There have been 54 illnesses in five different health units associated with the consumption of this product. The majority of cases (49) have been linked to a local outbreak involving a caterer in Ottawa which took place in March. The caterer closed voluntarily but has since reopened.

Health units will support the Canadian Food Inspection Agency recall by ensuring institutions that serve high risk populations are contacted and told not to serve the affected product. When frozen, the product has a one-year shelf life.

Questions and Answers:

What is Salmonella?

Salmonella is a bacteria that can cause food-borne infection called Salmonellosis. Symptoms include sudden onset of fever, headache, diarrhea, stomach cramps, nausea and sometimes vomiting. Symptoms can occur from 6 to 72 hours after becoming infected.

How is Salmonellosis spread?

Salmonella infection is spread by eating food contaminated by feces of an infected animal or person, or by drinking contaminated water. It can also be spread from person-to-person. Proper hand washing and safe food handling are key to preventing food-borne illnesses such as Salmonellosis.

Where is Salmonella found?

Salmonella is found in domestic and wild animals, including poultry, wild birds, swine, cattle, and rodents. Reptiles such as iguanas, bearded dragons, turtles, and domestic pets such as chicks, dogs and cats may harbour the bacteria. Humans are carriers of certain types of salmonella.

How are Salmonella outbreaks caused?

Outbreaks have been caused by inadequately cooked meat and poultry, uncooked or lightly cooked foods containing egg and egg products, raw milk and dairy products including dried milk.
Foods have been contaminated with feces from infected food handlers. Salmonella infections have been caused by foods such as meat and poultry products processed or prepared with contaminated utensils or on contaminated work surfaces.

Salmonella outbreaks have also been linked to raw fruits and vegetables (including sprouts) and unpasteurized milk and milk products such as raw milk cheese.

How Can You Prevent Salmonellosis?

- Wash hands thoroughly before, during and after food preparation.
- If you have diarrhea do not prepare food, care for hospitalized patients, the elderly or children.
- Cook ground poultry and poultry pieces to a minimum temperature of 74°C (165°F). Whole poultry must be cooked to 82°C (180°F). Cook other ground meats to 71°C (160°F). Use a probe thermometer to verify cooking temperatures.
- Place cooked foods on clean surfaces to prevent recontamination.
- Do not leave food at room temperature for longer than two hours.
- Use only pasteurized milk and milk products.
- Thoroughly cook eggs. Do not consume raw eggs or inadequately cooked eggs (over easy, or sunny side up). Do not use an egg if it appears that the shell has been broken or damaged before you handle it.
- Avoid eating raw eggs (as in homemade ice cream or eggnog). Commercially manufactured ice cream and eggnog are made with pasteurized eggs.
- Thoroughly wash fruits and vegetables before eating them.
- When buying, preparing and storing food, keep raw meats separate from fruits, vegetables, cooked foods and ready-to-eat foods.
- Reptiles have been associated with Salmonellosis; always wash your hands after handling them. Reptiles, including turtles, are not appropriate pets for children.
- Salmonella infections can be serious in infants and young children, pregnant women and their unborn babies, and older adults, who are at a higher risk for food-borne illness, as are people with weakened immune systems (such as those with HIV/AIDS, cancer, diabetes, kidney disease, and transplant patients).

How many cases have been linked to this ground beef?

There have been 54 illnesses in five different health units associated with the consumption of this product. The majority of cases (49) have been linked to a local outbreak involving a caterer in Ottawa which took place in March. The caterer closed voluntarily but has since reopened.

Where are these cases located?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ottawa</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leeds, Grenville and Lanark</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1 case was linked to the local</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outbreak in Ottawa)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elgin-St. Thomas</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middlesex-London</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What actions has the province taken to date?

On March 12, 2012, Public Health Ontario (PHO) was notified of a Salmonella outbreak being investigated by Ottawa Public Health (OPH). As part of OPH’s investigation, food samples were submitted for testing.

A sample of frozen ground beef tested positive for Salmonella Typhimurium. The genetic fingerprint of the Salmonella is considered to be rare in Canada, with only 1-4 cases expected nationally per year.

An enhanced surveillance directive (ESD) was issued to the province’s health units by PHO on March 30. ESDs are for reportable diseases in order to assist with the provincial investigation of urgent situations or obtain data required for timely surveillance.

The ministry and Public Health Ontario declared a provincial outbreak and established an Ontario Outbreak Investigation Coordination Committee (OOICC) on April 2, 2012 following the identification of genetically similar cases outside of the Ottawa area.

Subsequent work has enabled provincial officials to link the illnesses to the ground beef produced by Intercity Packers (East).

Do you know where this product has been distributed?

The product has been distributed to commercial institutions (hotels, cafeterias) and public institutions (hospitals, schools, colleges and universities) across the province.

To our knowledge, the beef was not distributed to grocery stores or to long-term care homes.

What are you doing now?

Health units will support the Canadian Food Inspection Agency recall by ensuring institutions that serve high risk populations are contacted and told not to serve the affected product. When frozen, the product has a one-year shelf life.