



***Salmonella* Typhimurium Outbreak Linked to Peanut Butter and Peanut Butter-Containing Products**

Since September 2008, 550 people from 43 states and Canada have been sickened with a type of *Salmonella* known as *Salmonella* Typhimurium. A total of 116 patients have been hospitalized, and the infection may have contributed to eight deaths. Local and national public health authorities traced this particular *Salmonella* to peanut butter and peanut paste produced at one plant operated by the Peanut Corporation of America in Blakely, Georgia. Peanut butter and peanut butter paste are ingredients in many foods produced and distributed by other companies.

The Peanut Corporation of America ceased operation in February, 2009 and has recalled all items produced at its Georgia facility since July 1, 2007.

While the company supplied less than 1 percent of peanut products sold in the U.S., it reportedly supplied peanut butter and peanut paste to more than 300 customers, many of whom used Peanut Corporation of America's products as an ingredient.

King Nut peanut butter served in institutions, such as schools and nursing homes, and peanut butter-containing products, such as Austin and Keebler prepackaged peanut butter crackers--sold directly to the public--are responsible for the outbreak.

Hundreds of other peanut butter-containing products are under investigation and many have been recalled pending further information. The more than 2,000 recalled products range from cookies to crackers to ice cream. Pet food has also been recalled.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) note that national brand name jars of peanut butter sold in grocery stores, such as Skippy and Jif are not, at this time, associated with this outbreak.



According to Barbara Ingham, food safety specialist with the University of Wisconsin-Extension, consumers who want the most up-to-date information can find a complete list of recalled products on the Food and Drug Administration website:

<http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/salmonellatyph.html>

"The number of products on this list is expected to increase," says Ingham. "The FDA, along with the CDC, continues to investigate this outbreak with the help of local officials."

A searchable database of recalled products is available online at:

<http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/peanutbutterrecall/index.cfm>

Consumers without Internet access may call 1-800-CDC-INFO (available 24 hours a day, seven days a week) for product recall information. "Consumers may also wish to call a food company directly; food companies are required to list their phone number on any packaged food item," Ingham notes.

The FDA and the CDC Recommend the Following to Consumers:

- If you have recalled products in your home, discard them.
- Avoid eating products made with peanut butter, peanut paste, or other peanut-containing products if you are unsure whether these products have been recalled.
- National brands of jarred peanut butter sold in grocery stores have not been implicated in this outbreak.

"Consumers with pets should be aware that some pet foods and pet treats may contain peanut butter, including dog biscuits and bird food. If you have a recalled pet product in your household, do not feed it to your pet or other animals," says Ingham.

For more information about this outbreak and your pet, visit http://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/typhimurium/salmonella_pets.html



The **illness salmonellosis** is characterized by diarrhea, fever, and abdominal cramps, usually 12 to 72 hours after infection, but the onset of symptoms can take longer. The illness usually lasts 4 to 7 days, and most people recover without treatment. In some cases, the diarrhea may be so severe that the patient needs to be hospitalized. In these patients, the Salmonella infection may spread from the intestines to the blood stream, and then to other body sites. It can be fatal without prompt treatment with antibiotics. The elderly, infants and those with impaired immune systems are more likely to become severely ill.

Anyone who thinks they might have become ill from eating peanut butter or peanut-containing products should consult their health-care provider immediately.