

The Redwoods Group Insurance Program for YMCAs

LESSONS IN THE NEWS

Topic: Peanut Butter Products Recall

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More Salmonella Peanut Butter Recalls Coming

WebMD Health News - January 27, 2009 -- FDA today encouraged consumers to keep checking the list of peanut butter product recalls related to the ongoing salmonella outbreak because that list is likely to keep growing.

"We expect the list of recalled product to continue to expand," Stephen Sundlof, DVM, director of the FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, said today at a joint FDA-CDC news conference.

As of Jan. 25, the CDC had reports of at least 501 people in 43 states and one person in Canada sickened by the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Typhimurium, and eight deaths that may be linked to the outbreak.

The latest case reported to the CDC began on Jan. 9, and the outbreak is ongoing, though the number of new cases has "decreased modestly," Robert Tauxe, MD, MPH, deputy director of the CDC's Division of Foodborne, Bacterial and Mycotic Diseases, said at the news conference.

The FDA has traced the source of the outbreak to a Peanut Corporation of America (PCA) facility in Blakely, Ga. The FDA has finished investigating that facility and found deficiencies in the facility's good manufacturing practices.

Those problems included about 12 incidents during 2007 and 2008 in which the PCA's internal testing detected salmonella and released the products after retesting, sometimes done by a second lab, according to Michael Rogers, director of field investigations in the FDA's Office of Regional Operations.

Besides the *Salmonella* Typhimurium strain that has caused all of the reported illnesses, health officials have found three other salmonella strains tied to PCA products. One of those strains was found in an unopened tub of peanut butter; the other two were found in cracks in the floor of the PCA's Blakely plant.

The PCA, in a statement released to the media, says the company "has cooperated fully with FDA from day one during the course of this investigation. We have shared with them every record that they have asked for that is in our possession and we will continue to do so."

Peanut Butter Recalls

Nearly 400 products have been recalled, according to the FDA's web site, which includes a [searchable](#) list of the recalled products.

Recent peanut butter recalls include:

- Trader Joe's: 7-ounce packages of sliced green apples with all-natural peanut butter and Peanut Butter Chew Coated & Drizzled Granola Bars, Nutty Chocolate Chewy Coated & Drizzled Granola Bars, and Sutter's Formula Cookies
- Kellogg Company: All sizes of ShopRite Peanut Butter on Toasty Crackers and ShopRite Peanut Butter and Cheese Cracker Snacks
- Falcon Trading Company / SunRidge Farms: Certain cases of Naturally Preferred Honey Nut Nuggets, SunRidge Tropical Golden Nuggets, SunRidge Chocolate Energy Bars, and SunRidge Energy Nuggets
- Supreme Protein: Certain lots of Supreme Protein brand Peanut Butter Crunch Bars, Supreme Protein brand Caramel Nut Bars, and Supreme Protein brand Caramel Nut (Energy) Bars

The PCA's products aren't sold directly to stores, but they were distributed to a wide range of companies for use in products or for further distribution. The FDA and other health officials have visited nearly 1,000 firms that purchased products from the PCA, according to Sundlof.

You won't find "PCA" or "Peanut Corporation of America" on product labels, Sundlof notes. If a peanut butter product isn't on the FDA's list of recalled products, "consumers may wish to look at the company's web site or call the toll-free number listed on most packaging" to check on its status, says Sundlof. He cautions that the FDA hasn't verified any information that consumers may get directly from companies about peanut butter safety.

"If consumers are in doubt about the safety of their products, they should not eat them until the scope of the recall is clear," says Sundlof.

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No End in Sight to Peanut Product Recalls Spurred by Salmonella Outbreak; Criminal Probe Under Way

WebMD Health News, Jan. 30, 2009 -- More recalls and a criminal investigation are the latest news in the salmonella outbreak linked to the Peanut Corporation of America's processing plant in Blakely, Ga.

More than 400 peanut products have been recalled in the wake of the outbreak. Those items are listed in the [FDA's searchable list of recalled products](#). That list is expected to keep growing, so FDA officials encourage consumers to check it regularly. Companies that have recently announced new or expanded peanut butter recalls include:

- **Arico Natural Foods Company** is recalling Arico Peanut Butter Cookies and Cookie Bars.
- **Orchard Valley Harvest** is recalling certain conventional and organic peanuts roasted and packed for Safeway.
- **Country Maid Inc.** has expanded its recall of 2-pound packages of Classic Breaks Peanut Butter Cookie Dough.
- **Hy-Vee Inc.** is recalling its freshly made party mix and peanut brittle sold at Hy-Vee stores in Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Minnesota.
- **Meijer** is recalling Meijer Bulk Dry Roasted Peanuts, Markets of Meijer Dry Roasted Peanuts, Meijer Vanilla Sundae Cone w/Peanuts, and Meijer Fudge Sundae Cone w/Peanuts.
- **Fieldbrook Foods Corp.** is recalling ice cream sundae cone products that contain granulated peanuts from PCA. This recall includes more than 80 products sold under the brands America's Choice, Artic Classic, Big Y, Bon, Byrn Dairy, Carnival, Cub Foods, Dolly Madison, Econo, Food Club, Flavorite, Food City, Giant Eagle, Giant, Grande, Greens, Hill Country

Fare, Hagan, Hood, Ice Girl, IGA, Kay's Key Food, Krasdale, Lowes, Market Basket, Meijer, Pathmark, Price Chopper, Pricerite, Publix, River Valley, Redners, Richfood, Roundy's, Shop 'n Save, Shoprite, Shurfine, Shurfresh, Stater Bros, Stop & Shop, Sundae Shoppe, Tops, United Dairy, Valu Time, Velvet, Weis, and Winn Dixie.

- **Wells' Dairy Inc.** is recalling all Blue Bunny No Sugar Added Reduced Fat Bunny Tracks Ice Cream with "Best Used By" dates prior to Jan. 29, 2009, and one lot of Blue Bunny Personals Bunny Tracks with a "Best Used By" date of 09/11/09.
- **Wegmans Food Markets Inc.** is recalling its peanut covered doughnuts (sold individually), peanut butter cookies (sold by the pound only in Wegmans stores with a full-service cookie shop), and chocolate peanut butter tarts (sold only in Wegmans stores with a full-service patisserie).

If you know someone without Internet access, they can call the CDC at 800-CDC-INFO and a staff member will search the FDA's database for them.

At least 529 people in 43 states and a person in Canada have been sickened by the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Typhimurium. The outbreak may have contributed to at least eight deaths, according to the CDC.

The outbreak isn't over, but there has been a "modest" drop in reported cases, the CDC's Robert Tauxe, MD, MPH, said today at a news conference. Tauxe is deputy director of the CDC's Division of Foodborne, Bacterial and Mycotic Diseases.

The most recent onset of illness was Jan. 16, and more reports may be coming since it can take a couple of weeks for new cases to be reported to the CDC.

What published sources tell us:

- More than 2500 products have been recalled as of 2/20/09 – the numbers rose very quickly
- Consumers are encouraged to keep checking the list of peanut butter product recalls related to the ongoing salmonella outbreak at [FDA's list of recalled peanut products](#). If someone does not have internet access they can call the CDC at 1-800-CDC-INFO.
- CDC has had reports of at least 529 people in 43 states sickened by the outbreak and nine deaths that may be linked to the outbreak. The above stories cite one Canadian incident, but later Canadian sources claim no Canadian incidents.

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- The number of new cases has decreased modestly but the outbreak is not over.
- FDA has traced the source of the outbreak to a Peanut Corporation of America (PCA) facility in Blakely, GA
- Health officials have found *Salmonella typhimurium* and three other salmonella strains tied to PCA products.
- PCA is not considered a giant in the industry – however, their peanut paste is used by many other manufacturers; no major peanut butters are included in the list of contaminated products

What published sources don't tell us:

- Salmonellosis is a type of food poisoning by the salmonella bacterium. There are many different kinds of these bacteria; *Salmonella typhimurium* and *Salmonella enteritidis* are the most common types in the United States.
- Salmonellosis is contracted by eating food contaminated with salmonella. This contamination can occur during food processing or handling. A frequent cause is a food handler who does not wash his or her hands with soap after using the bathroom.
- Symptoms of salmonellosis include diarrhea, fever, and abdominal cramps. These develop 12 to 72 hours after infection, and the illness usually lasts 4 to 7 days. Most people recover without treatment. However, diarrhea and dehydration may be so severe that it is necessary to go to the hospital. Older adults, children, infants, and those with impaired immune systems are at highest risk.

What we must do:

- Check the latest list of recalls frequently and compare with all stock inventories that contain peanuts or peanut butter.
- Be aware of the peanuts and peanut products that are used for after-school snacks and staff foods.
- Contact all vendors who supply snack products to your facilities and have them
 - check all the peanut related products that they supply in their vending machines
 - provide a written statement that all products have been checked and that the status of products they provide will be regularly checked against the FDA's listing
- If you are in doubt about the safety of products, you should not eat or serve them until the scope of the recall is clear.
- Dispose of any potentially contaminated products in a way that those items will not get eaten.
- Wash your hands after handling any potentially contaminated products.
- Educate your members and guests to help protect your YMCA community.

Conclusion:

This is a wide spread community health issue that could have devastating effects on your community. YMCAs, as the largest provider of childcare in the United States, have the obligation to ensure that the snacks provided in their programs are always safe and nutritious. Your responsibility of educating goes beyond programming and membership – it should reach your community as a whole. Help protect your members, staff, and guests from this type of food poisoning by examining your snacks and educating all those you can reach.

Please call us at 800-463-8546 to discuss this or any other risk management safety tip, or visit our web site at www.redwoodsgroup.com to learn more about YMCA risk management related issues.