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Subject: Public Health Agency of Canada: Public Health Notice - Outbreak of Salmonella infections under investigation (long English cucumbers)



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Public Health Notice

[Public Health Notice - Outbreak of Salmonella infections under investigation](#)

Why you should take note

The Public Health Agency of Canada is collaborating with provincial public health partners, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Health Canada to investigate an outbreak of Salmonella infections involving five provinces: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Quebec. The illness reported in Quebec was related to travel to British Columbia.

Based on the investigation findings to date, exposure to long English cucumbers has been identified as the likely source of the outbreak. Many of the individuals who became sick reported eating long English cucumbers before their illness. However, more information is needed to determine the possible causes of contamination. The outbreak appears to be ongoing, as illnesses continue to be reported.

The Public Health Agency of Canada is issuing this updated public health notice to inform residents in western Canada of the investigation findings to date and to share important safe food handling practices to help prevent further Salmonella infections. At this time, there is no evidence to suggest that residents in eastern Canada are affected by this outbreak.

This public health notice will be updated on a regular basis as the investigation evolves.

Who is most at risk

Anyone can become sick with a Salmonella infection, but infants, children, seniors and those with weakened immune systems are at higher risk of serious illness because their immune systems are fragile.

Most people who become ill from a Salmonella infection will recover fully after a few days. It is possible for some people to be infected with the bacteria and to not get sick or show any symptoms, but to still be able to spread the infection to others.

What you should do to protect your health

It is difficult to know whether a product is contaminated with Salmonella because you can't see, smell or taste it. To help prevent Salmonella infections, the Public Health Agency of Canada recommends monitoring the outbreak investigation by checking for regular updates to this public health notice and following safe food handling tips. The following tips for preparing fresh fruits and vegetables, including long English cucumbers, may help reduce your risk of getting sick, but they may not fully eliminate the risk of illness.

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling fresh produce.
- Cut away any bruised or damaged areas on fresh produce, since harmful bacteria can thrive in these areas. Be sure to clean your knife with hot water and soap before using it again.
- Wash fresh produce thoroughly under fresh, cool, running water, even if you plan to peel them. This helps prevent the spread of any bacteria that may be present.
- Don't soak fresh produce in a sink full of water. It can become contaminated by bacteria in the sink.
- Use a clean produce brush to scrub items that have firm surfaces like cucumbers, oranges, melons, potatoes, carrots. It is not necessary to use produce cleansers to wash fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Use one cutting board for produce, and a separate one for raw meat, poultry, fish and seafood.
- Place peeled or cut fruits and vegetables on a separate clean plate or in a container to prevent them from becoming cross-contaminated.
- Use paper towels to wipe kitchen surfaces, or change dishcloths daily to avoid the risk of cross-contamination and the spread of bacteria, and avoid using sponges as they are harder to keep bacteria-free.
- Sanitize countertops, cutting boards and utensils before and after preparing food. Use a kitchen sanitizer (following the directions on the container) or a bleach solution (5 ml household bleach to 750 ml of water), and rinse with water.

Symptoms

Symptoms of a [Salmonella infection](#), called salmonellosis, typically start six to 72 hours after exposure to Salmonella bacteria from an infected animal or contaminated product.

Symptoms include:

- fever
- chills
- diarrhea
- abdominal cramps
- headache
- nausea
- vomiting

These symptoms usually last for four to seven days. In healthy people, salmonellosis often clears up without treatment. In some cases, severe illness and hospitalization may occur. In some cases, antibiotics may be required. People who are infected with Salmonella bacteria can be infectious from several days to several weeks. People who experience symptoms, or who have underlying medical conditions, should contact their health care provider if they suspect they have a Salmonella infection.

We hope this information and related link will be useful to you.

If you do not wish to receive these health-related messages, please let us know in your reply to this e-mail.

Thank you.

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