



December 24, 2014



Marion County
Medical Multi-Agency
Coordination Center

NATIONAL TERRORISM ADVISORY SYSTEM

No active alerts



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THREAT ANALYSIS

CDC warns multi-state listeriosis outbreak likely linked to caramel apples

Prepackaged, commercially produced caramel apples are believed to be the source of an outbreak of listeriosis that has sickened at least 28 people in 10 states. Twenty-six people have been hospitalized and five have died.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are working with state health authorities to determine whether there are specific brands responsible for the illnesses. Meanwhile, the agencies are recommending that U.S. consumers avoid eating any prepackaged caramel apples. (Sources: [CDC](#), [Chicago Tribune](#))

Listeriosis is a rare illness that can occur when a person consumes food contaminated with the bacteria *Listeria monocytogenes*. Listeriosis can cause serious and sometimes fatal complications, especially among the elderly, people with chronic medical conditions or compromised immune systems and pregnant women and their babies. Nine of the illnesses in this current outbreak have been reported in pregnant women or newborns. (Sources: [FDA](#), [CDC](#))

Caramel apples are most often sold in grocery and retail stores during the fall season, but the CDC warns that some stores may still have them in stock or consumers could have them in their homes because they have shelf lives typically in excess of a month. Illness onset for the cases reported so far occurred between October 17 and November 27. Any new cases since December 3 would not be reflected in the current data. (Source: [CDC](#))

ACTION STEPS

1

Do not eat prepackaged, commercially produced caramel apples and advise patients to follow the same guidance. (Source: [CDC](#))

2

Review the [symptoms](#) of listeriosis, which can vary by population but usually include fever and muscle aches sometimes preceded by diarrhea or other gastrointestinal symptoms. Ask any patient who presents with these systems whether he or she has consumed prepackaged caramel apples within the past several weeks and consider listeriosis as a possible diagnosis.

3

Advise patients that any surfaces, including refrigerators, that could have had contact with commercially produced caramel apples should be thoroughly disinfected with a solution of one tablespoon of chlorine bleach to one gallon of hot water and dried with a clean cloth or paper towel. Consumers with questions can contact the FDA at 1-888-SAFEFOOD. (Source: [FDA](#))

UPCOMING EVENTS

WEDNESDAY

24

No Mass Gatherings Scheduled

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