

## LISTERIOSIS OUTBREAK IN ONTARIO

*Chief Medical Officer Of Health Advises Caution On Deli Meat Food Recall*

### NEWS

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Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health is advising the public that there is an outbreak of Listeriosis in the province.

Listeriosis is a rare but potentially serious food-borne illness that can severely affect the elderly, pregnant women and individuals with weakened immune systems. It is caused by the bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes*.

In July 2008, routine surveillance conducted by the Ministry detected a marked increase in cases of Listeriosis being reported by Ontario health units.

As of yesterday, there have been 29 cases associated with the outbreak across 17 health units. Of these, 13 are confirmed cases, and the rest are probable and suspect cases which are under investigation by the local health units. Outbreak associated cases of Listeriosis have also been reported in British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Quebec. Ontario is working with the Public Health Agency of Canada and the other provinces in the investigation.

### THE CANADIAN FOOD INSPECTION AGENCY

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and Maple Leaf Consumer Foods are warning the public through their standard food recall system not to serve or consume specified lots of ready-to-eat deli meats because of possible contamination with *Listeria monocytogenes*. These products have been distributed primarily to food service institutions such as restaurants, hospitals and nursing homes. A complete list of the products affected by the recall is available on the CFIA website.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has asked all public health units to contact hospitals, long-term care facilities and daycare centres to ensure these products are not served or consumed.

### QUOTES

"I strongly advise the public, especially those at high risk for Listeriosis, such as the elderly, pregnant women and those with weak immune systems, to make sure they avoid consuming these products," said Dr. David C. Williams, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health. "I have also asked all public health units to advise emergency rooms in their jurisdictions to be on alert for cases. All suspect and confirmed cases of Listeriosis must be reported immediately to local public health units and in turn to the Ministry within one business day of notification of report."

## QUICK FACTS

- Listeriosis is a reportable disease under Ontario Regulation 569 of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*.
- The incubation period for Listeriosis is from three to seventy days with an average incubation period of three weeks.

## LEARN MORE

Find out more about this recall and other [CFIA consumer food recalls](#) online

Find out more about [Listeriosis](#) online

Contact your [local public health unit](#).

**For public inquires call ServiceOntario, INFOline at 1-866-532-3161 (Toll-free in Ontario only)**

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