



# INFOSAN Alert

Recall of ice cream and other frozen products due to contamination with *Listeria monocytogenes*

**Date:**

April 24, 2015

**Countries:**

Anguilla

Belize

Chile

China

Dominica

Dominican Republic (the)

Egypt

Haiti

Jordan

Kuwait

Mexico

Oman

Panama

Peru

Philippines

Qatar

Saint Kitts and Nevis

Saudi Arabia

Trinidad and Tobago

United Arab Emirates

United States of America

Yemen

- WHO regions:

Eastern Mediterranean Region

Western Pacific Region

Region of the Americas

**Hazard:**

- Bacteria>Listeria>monocytogenes

**Food category:**

Snacks, desserts, and other foods

Ice cream

frozen yogurt

sherbet and frozen snacks

**Illness reported:**

Yes

**Number of Ill people:**

10

**Reported to IHR:**

Yes

**Alert details:**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state and local authorities are investigating a listeriosis outbreak linked to ice cream and other frozen products produced by Blue Bell Creameries. Listeriosis is caused by the bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes*.

Listeriosis is a rare but serious illness caused by eating food contaminated with the bacterium called *Listeria monocytogenes*. *Listeria* can cause a serious, life-threatening illness. People at higher risk for listeriosis include adults 65 years or older, people with weakened immune systems, and pregnant women. In pregnant women, listeriosis can cause miscarriage, stillbirth, premature labor, and serious illness or death in newborn babies.

**Detailed Information from the USA:**

Beginning in March of 2015, Blue Bell Creameries of Brenham, Texas, started voluntarily recalling certain ice cream products potentially contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes*. On April 20, 2015, the firm expanded its recall to include all of its products currently on the market because they also have the potential to be contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes*. This recall includes ice cream, frozen yogurt, sherbet and frozen snacks made at all Blue Bell facilities.

As of April 21, 2015, a total of ten people with listeriosis related to this outbreak have been confirmed in the U.S. Illness onset dates ranged from January 2010 to January 2015 and were identified through a retrospective review of the [PulseNet](#) database for DNA fingerprints that were similar to isolates collected from Blue Bell ice cream samples. All ten (100%) patients were hospitalized, and three deaths have been reported. Several strains of *Listeria monocytogenes* are involved in this outbreak.

**International Distribution:**

FDA has received information of international distribution of the recalled product and has notified government authorities of the following countries:

**Belize, British Overseas Territories (Anguilla, Bermuda, Montserrat, Tortola, and Turks and Caicos), Chile, China, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Haiti, Jordan, Kuwait, Mexico, Oman, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saudi Arabia, Trinidad and Tobago, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.**

At this time, FDA is unaware of any other international distribution.

## Recommendations for Consumers:

FDA and the CDC have recommended that consumers not eat any Blue Bell brand ice cream or frozen products and institutions and retailers should not sell or serve them. Anyone who experiences fever and muscle aches, sometimes preceded by diarrhea or other gastrointestinal symptoms, or develops fever and chills after eating a Blue Bell ice cream or frozen product (s) should seek medical care and tell the health care provider about any history of eating that product (s). Symptoms can appear from a few days up to a few weeks after consumption of the contaminated food.

## PFGE Patterns and Whole Genome Sequences:

Strains belonging to three serotypes 1/2a, 1/2b and 3b are involved in the outbreak displaying 13 different PFGE pattern combinations (*AscI* and *ApaI*) of which five have been seen in patients and 12 in the product. One pattern GX6A16.0282,GX6A12.0355 (1/2a) has been isolated from a patient epidemiologically linked to the product but not from the product.

<b>PFGE Pattern (serotype)</b>	<b>Frequency in outbreak: non-human (human)</b>
GX6A16.0336,GX6A12.1840 (3b)	35 (0)
GX6A16.0061,GX6A12.0026 (1/2b)	19 (1)
GX6A16.0336,GX6A12.2255 (3b)	13 (5)
GX6A16.0026,GX6A12.0227 (1/2b)	11 (2)
GX6A16.0020,GX6A12.0227 (3b)	10 (1)
GX6A16.0026,GX6A12.0489 (1/2b)	5 (0)
GX6A16.0061,GX6A12.2551 (1/2b)	3 (0)
GX6A16.0720,GX6A12.0026 (1/2b)	3 (0)
GX6A16.0026,GX6A12.0077 (1/2b)	2 (0)
GX6A16.0617,GX6A12.1840 (3b)	2 (0)
GX6A16.0282,GX6A12.0355 (1/2a)	0 (1)
GX6A16.0061,GX6A12.1512 (1/2b)	1 (0)
GX6A16.0207,GX6A12.0511 (1/2b)	1 (0)

Tiff-files with examples of the implicated PFGE pattern combinations (and a bundle file with the patterns associated with the outbreak) are attached and the locations of the relevant PFGE patterns are as follows:

<b>KS14117</b>		<b>PFGE Pattern</b>
AscI: lane 2	ApaI: lane 4	GX6A16.0282/GX6A12.0355
<b>SC15015</b>	<b>SC15016</b>	
AscI: lane 5	ApaI: lane 5	GX6A16.0026/GX6A12.0489
AscI: lane 2	ApaI: lane 2	GX6A16.0061/GX6A12.1512
AscI: lane 3	ApaI: lane 3	GX6A16.0061/GX6A12.0026
AscI: lane 8	ApaI: lane 8	GX6A16.0061/GX6A12.2551
<b>SC15017</b>	<b>SC15018</b>	
AscI: lane 13	ApaI: lane 13	GX6A16.0020/GX6A12.0227

AscI: lane 7	ApaI: lane 7	GX6A16.0026/GX6A12.0077
AscI: lane 5	ApaI: lane 5	GX6A16.0026/GX6A12.0227
<b>FSE15010</b>		
AscI: lane 2	ApaI: lane 3	GX6A16.0207/GX6A12.0511
<b>FDN15039</b>		
AscI: lane 2	ApaI: lane 2	GX6A16.0336/GX6A12.2255
AscI: lane 3	ApaI: lane 3	GX6A16.0336/GX6A12.1840
AscI: lane 4	ApaI: lane 4	GX6A16.0617/GX6A12.1840
<b>FCF15025</b>		
AscI: lane 11	ApaI: lane 11	GX6A16.0720/GX6A12.0026
<b>FCF15026</b>		

### Raw whole genome sequences:

By whole genome sequencing the strains form four clusters. Representative raw sequences from each cluster are located in the Sequence Read Archive (SRA) at:

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sra>

SAMN03400210

SAMN03400211

SAMN03400208

SAMN03275458

### From the INFOSAN Secretariat:

To date, the INFOSAN Secretariat is not aware of cases of illness linked to consumption of the implicated products in any other countries other than the ones mentioned above.

If cases of Listeriosis are found to be linked to the recalled products in your country, please liaise with your National IHR Focal Point and also ensure this information is reported to the INFOSAN Secretariat so that we can accurately summarize the international aspects of this event.

Measures taken and outcomes of epidemiologic and food safety investigations in countries in receipt of recalled products should be posted in the related discussion forum on the INFOSAN Community Website (<https://extranet.who.int/infosan/en/content/discussion-about-recall-ice-...>).

Please note that information about this event will also be shared with National IHR Focal Points through their Event Information Site (EIS).

Please contact the INFOSAN Secretariat ([emergencyinfosan@who.int](mailto:emergencyinfosan@who.int)) if you have any questions.