
Multistate Outbreak of Listeriosis Linked to Raw Milk Produced by Miller's Organic Farm in Pennsylvania

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Highlights

- [Read the Advice to Consumers](#)>>
- Collaborative investigative efforts of state, local, and federal public health and regulatory officials indicate that raw milk produced by Miller's Organic Farm in Bird-In-Hand, Pennsylvania, is the likely source of this outbreak.
 - Two people infected with the outbreak strain of *Listeria* were reported from California (1) and Florida (1). Both illnesses occurred in 2014.
 - Both people were hospitalized, and the ill person in Florida died as a result of listeriosis.
- Although the two illnesses occurred in 2014, the source of these illnesses wasn't known until January 29, 2016, when the U.S. Food and Drug Administration informed CDC that whole genome sequencing of *Listeria* bacteria from raw chocolate milk produced by Miller's Organic Farm showed that it was closely related genetically to *Listeria* bacteria from the two ill people described above.
- Because *Listeria* was recently found in raw milk produced by Miller's Organic Farm, CDC is concerned that conditions may exist at the farm that may cause further contamination of raw milk and raw dairy products distributed by this company and make people sick.
- Raw milk is milk from cows or other animals that has not been pasteurized to kill harmful bacteria. This raw, unpasteurized milk can carry dangerous bacteria such as *Listeria*, *Salmonella*, *E. coli*, and *Campylobacter*, which are responsible for causing numerous foodborne illnesses and outbreaks.
- We recommend that people drink and eat only pasteurized dairy products (including soft cheese, ice cream, and yogurt).
 - Pasteurization is the process of heating milk to a high enough temperature for a long enough time to kill dangerous bacteria.
 - This is especially important for people at higher risk for foodborne illness: children younger than 5, pregnant women, adults 65 and older, and people with weakened immune systems.

March 17, 2016

Initial Announcement

CDC and several states are investigating an outbreak of *Listeria monocytogenes* infections (listeriosis). *Listeria* can cause a serious, life-threatening illness.

Public health investigators are using the PulseNet system to identify illnesses that may be part of this outbreak. PulseNet, coordinated by CDC, is the national subtyping network of public health and food regulatory agency laboratories. PulseNet performs DNA fingerprinting on *Listeria* bacteria isolated from ill people by using techniques called pulsed-field gel electrophoresis (PFGE) and whole genome sequencing (WGS). CDC PulseNet manages a national database of these DNA fingerprints to identify possible outbreaks.

Investigation of the Outbreak

Collaborative investigative efforts of state, local, and federal public health and regulatory officials indicate that raw milk produced by Miller's Organic Farm in Bird-In-Hand, Pennsylvania is the likely source of this outbreak. Raw milk is milk from cows or other animals that has not been pasteurized to kill harmful bacteria. This raw, unpasteurized milk can carry dangerous bacteria such as *Listeria*, *Salmonella*, *E. coli*, and *Campylobacter*, which are responsible for causing numerous foodborne illnesses and outbreaks.

In November 2015, samples of raw chocolate milk were collected from a raw milk conference held in Anaheim, California. The raw chocolate milk was produced by Miller's Organic Farm. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) isolated *Listeria* from the raw chocolate milk and conducted WGS testing on the isolate to get more genetic information about the bacteria. On January 29, 2016, FDA informed CDC that WGS determined that the *Listeria* bacteria from the raw chocolate milk was closely related genetically to *Listeria* bacteria from two people in two states who got sick in 2014, one from California and one from Florida.

The age of ill people from California and Florida ranged from 73 to 81 years. Both ill people were hospitalized, and the ill person from Florida died as a result of listeriosis.

Once the two illnesses were identified in late January, public health officials worked over several weeks to interview them or their family members about the foods they may have eaten and other exposures in the month before their illness started. Interviews were conducted with the ill person from California and family members for both ill people. It was reported that both ill people drank raw milk before they got sick. The family of the deceased person in Florida reported purchasing raw milk from Miller's Organic Farm.

Raw milk and raw dairy products can pose severe health risks, including death, especially for people at higher risk for foodborne illness, including children younger than 5, pregnant women, adults 65 and older, and people with weakened immune systems. We recommend that people drink and eat only pasteurized dairy products. Learn more about the dangers of drinking raw milk at the [CDC Food Safety and Raw Milk website](#).

Because *Listeria* was recently found in raw milk produced by Miller's Organic Farm, we are concerned that contaminated raw milk and other raw dairy products from this company could still be on the market and make people sick.

This investigation is ongoing. CDC and state and local public health partners are continuing laboratory surveillance through PulseNet to identify additional ill people and to interview them. Updates will be provided when more information is available.

At a Glance:

- Case Count: 2
- States: 2
- Deaths: 1
- Hospitalizations: 2
- Recall: No



Many people choose raw milk thinking it will improve their health, but it can cause serious illness in anyone. Outbreaks linked to raw milk have doubled in the past five years.



WHAT IS RAW MILK ANYWAY?



Raw milk has not been pasteurized to kill harmful, disease-causing germs, including bacteria, viruses, and parasites.



Pasteurization is the process of heating milk to 161°F for 15 seconds to kill harmful bacteria.



Before most milk in the U.S. was pasteurized, raw milk was a common source of foodborne illness.

HOLY COW!

RAW MILK OUTBREAKS ARE ON THE RISE IN THE U.S.

Raw Milk: Know the Raw Facts



CLICK TO VIEW CASE COUNT MAPS.

More Information:

- [Advice to Consumers](#)
- [Signs & Symptoms](#)
- [Key Resources](#)

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Content source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov/>)

National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases (NCEZID) (</ncezid/>)

Division of Foodborne, Waterborne, and Environmental Diseases (DFWED) (</ncezid/dfwed/index.html>)