

Serial number 2024/021

Date 07 June 2024

Event National outbreak of *Listeria monocytogenes* serotype 1/2a CC20 t5.140

Notified by Gastrointestinal Infections and Food Safety (One Health) Division

Authorised by Gauri Godbole, GIFSOH
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IRP Level: National – Standard Incident

Incident Lead: Nastassya Chandra

Instructions for Cascade

- **Devolved Administrations public health agencies** to cascade to Medical Directors and other DA teams as appropriate to their local arrangements
- **Regional Deputy Directors UKHSA** to cascade to Directors of Public Health
- **Directors of Public Health** to Adult Social Care teams and Directors of Adult Social Care
- **UKHSA microbiologists** to cascade to non-UKHSA labs (NHS labs and private)
- **UKHSA microbiologists** to cascade to NHS Trust infection leads
- **NHS labs/NHS infection leads/NHS microbiologist/NHS infectious disease specialists** to cascade to emergency departments and medical teams in the hospitals

Summary:

UKHSA and partner agencies are investigating an outbreak of *Listeria monocytogenes* serotype 1/2a Clonal Complex (CC)20, 5-single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) designation 1.6.17.18.109.140.%. The purpose of this communication is to ensure health and social care professionals are aware of the national investigation into a CC20 t5.140 cluster and its association with sandwiches supplied to NHS hospitals across the UK.

Background and Interpretation:

UKHSA together with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) are investigating a cluster of two cases of *Listeria monocytogenes* (LM) belonging to serotype 1/2a CC20 t5.140 on whole genome sequencing. Both cases were diagnosed on 6th May 2024, had extensive exposure to the NHS hospitals and had consumed hospital sandwiches during their incubation period, one was an inpatient in a hospital in the South East and the other in a London hospital. Both cases are over 60 years of age, one male and one female, both were immunocompromised and both are now deceased. The clinical isolates matched at the same 5 SNP level to LM identified from a sandwich sampled on 09 April 2024 at an NHS hospital in the South West region and was tested as part of a routine surveillance contract with UKHSA.

Both hospitals at which the cases were admitted to are supplied by the same food business operator (FBO) for which there was a matching (at the same 5 SNP level) food isolate. Additional environmental sampling at the FBO has positively identified *Listeria monocytogenes* (awaiting whole genome sequencing), suggesting that there is ongoing

contamination at the manufacturing site of the FBO. Food chain and microbiological investigations are ongoing.

FSA and local authorities have advised the company to cease production and undertake a product recall. Specific communications to NHS Trusts regarding removal of implicated products will be cascaded by the company and NHS England. The company will provide a recall notice to care homes and other potential settings where the sandwiches are supplied imminently.

Implications & Recommendations for UKHSA Regions

Given the recall and withdrawal plan, individuals who may have consumed sandwiches in hospital settings may seek advice and healthcare services.

Members of the public should be re-assured the overall risk of due to listeriosis is low but increases with age as well as in pregnancy and in immunocompromised individuals, including those undergoing immunosuppressive treatments and with chronic liver or kidney disease. Please direct any enquiries regarding this incident to the Listeria team (incident028.nrc@ukhsa.gov.uk and Listeria@ukhsa.gov.uk).

If a member of the public reports being unwell, they should seek advice through NHS111 or their local health services as is usual practice.

Implications & Recommendations for UKHSA sites and services

Diagnostic laboratories should continue to urgently refer all isolates of *Listeria monocytogenes* to the Gastrointestinal Bacteria Reference Unit (GBRU) at Colindale using L4 referral form for typing. NHS Trusts and their testing laboratories are also requested to share any food and environmental isolates of listeria they may found during their environmental surveillance with the GBRU (using L7 referral form) <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/gbru-reference-and-diagnostic-services>

Food Water & Environment laboratories may be asked to examine food and environmental samples taken as part of local authority outbreak investigations.

Implications & Recommendations for NHS and Diagnostic laboratories

Specific communications to NHS Trusts will be circulated by NHS England regarding removal of implicated products.

Diagnostic laboratories should continue to refer all isolates of *Listeria monocytogenes* to the Gastrointestinal Bacteria Reference Unit at Colindale for typing as soon as possible. Microbiologists should share this notification with the relevant medical specialities, including Emergency Medicine, Paediatrics, Obstetrics.

Implications and recommendations for Local Authorities

Local authorities / Environmental Health Teams may be asked to contact cases linked to this incident, should they occur in their area. Local authorities may also be asked to contact businesses to trace products if those businesses are located in their area. Care homes who purchase sandwiches from the supplier should be provided with information from the supplier but may seek further information.
