



Multistate Outbreak of Salmonella Mbandaka linked to Kellogg's Honey Smacks Cereal
Information for Clinicians, Laboratorians and Local Health Department Investigators

Date: June 15, 2018

Public Health Message Type: Alert Advisory Update Information

Intended Audience: All public health partners Healthcare providers Infection preventionists
 Local health departments Schools/child care centers ACOs
 Animal health professionals Other:

Key Points:

- ❖ NJDOH is working closely with CDC, public health and regulatory officials in several states, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to investigate a multistate outbreak of *Salmonella* Mbandaka infections in which NJ currently has three confirmed cases.
- ❖ The Kellogg Company recalled 15.3 oz and 23 oz. packages of Honey Smacks cereal and consumers should throw away any leftover cereal and retailers should not sell or serve the recalled cereal.
- ❖ Clinicians should order testing by culture when the clinical presentation or history suggests a possible *Salmonella* infection.
- ❖ Laboratories should report and send *Salmonella* isolates to the state public health laboratory for additional characterization.
- ❖ Local health department (LHD) investigators should promptly interview all Salmonellosis cases with the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) Salmonella worksheet and update CDRSS with exposures.
(http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/salmonella/salmonella_worksheet.pdf)

Reporting and Isolate Submission:

- ❖ All cases of Salmonellosis should be reported in CDRSS or to the LHD where the patient resides. Contact information for LHDs during business hours can be found at: www.localhealth.nj.gov.
- ❖ It is also required that laboratories submit all *Salmonella* isolates to PHEL within three days for further characterization to aid in public health surveillance.

Contact Information:

Deepam Thomas, Foodborne Disease Surveillance Coordinator (deepam.thomas@doh.nj.gov) or
The Communicable Disease Service at (609) 826-5964 during business hours.

References and Resources:

- ❖ NJDOH Salmonellosis Home Page: <http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/salmonella.shtml>
- ❖ CDC Web posting: <https://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/Mbandaka-06-18/index.html>
- ❖ FDA Web posting: <https://www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/ucm610815.htm>



Background:

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that *Salmonella* causes about 1.2 million illnesses, 23,000 hospitalizations, and 450 deaths in the United States every year. Food is the source for approximately 1 million of these illnesses. Most people infected with *Salmonella* develop diarrhea, fever and abdominal cramps between 12 and 72 hours after infection and illness usually lasts 4 to 7 days. Individuals usually recover even without treatment however in some people, the diarrhea may be so severe that the patient needs to be hospitalized. *Salmonella* infection may spread from the intestines to the bloodstream and then to other places in the body. Children younger than 5 years, adults older than 65, and people with weakened immune systems are more likely to have severe illness. *Salmonella* Mbandaka is one of many different serotypes of *Salmonella* bacteria, and cause similar illnesses as described above.

NJDOH is working closely with CDC, public health and regulatory officials in several states, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to investigate a multistate outbreak of *Salmonella* Mbandaka infections linked to Kellogg’s Honey Smacks Cereal. As of June 14, 2018, seventy-three people infected with the outbreak strain have been reported from 31 states. NJ has three confirmed cases associated with this outbreak; one each in Bergen, Mercer and Gloucester. Thirty (77%) of 39 people interviewed reported eating cold cereal and 14 people specifically reported eating Kellogg’s Honey Smacks cereal. Neither of the two NJ cases interviewed so far reported consuming the product.

On June 14, 2018, the Kellogg Company recalled the 15.3 oz. and 23 oz. packages of Kellogg’s Honey Smacks cereal that have a “best if used by” date from June 14, 2018 through June 14, 2019. The recalled products were distributed across the United States including Guam and Saipan and internationally in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, the Caribbean and Tahiti. Consumers are being advised to not eat any of the recalled Honey Smacks cereal even if no one got sick and to throw the rest away or return it for a refund. Any containers that the cereal was stored in should be washed with warm, soapy water before re-using.

Health Care Providers:

Diagnosing Salmonellosis requires testing a clinical specimen from an infected person to distinguish it from other illnesses that can cause diarrhea, fever, and abdominal cramps. Health Care Providers are requested to order cultures when the clinical presentation or history suggests a *Salmonella* infection.

Laboratories:

Identifying the specific strain of *Salmonella* is essential for finding outbreaks. Additional PFGE testing that can help determine if the cases are related to each other can only be performed at the State Lab so we urge all laboratories to report and send *Salmonella* positive isolates to the state public health laboratory for additional characterization.

Local Health Departments:

NJDOH requests that the NJDOH Salmonella worksheet be used when interviewing all persons who are laboratory-confirmed. The epidemiologic information gathered is critical to help find unique exposures, link reported cases and find sources of outbreaks. NJDOH works closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help facilitate investigation and outbreak detection of Salmonellosis cases. Timely identification of epi linkages and outbreaks can help prevent future transmission.