

# Communicable Disease Branch

## 2014 Program Alert # 7

"Peach, Plum, Nectarine, and Pluot Recall Issued by Wawona Packing Company due to Possible *Listeria monocytogenes* Contamination"

Date: July 24, 2014



To: Communicable Disease Staff in Local Health Departments

From: Nicole Lee, MPH, Foodborne Epidemiologist

The Wawona Packing Company of Cutler, California, recently issued a recall of certain lots of whole peaches (white and yellow), nectarines (white and yellow), plums and pluots packed between June 1, 2014 through July 12, 2014 due to the potential of the products being contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes* based on internal company testing. These type fruits are also referred to as "stone fruits" because they have large pits. The recall announcement along with a specific list of recalled products, dates, lots, block IDs, and pictures can be found here: <http://www.wawonapacking.com/VoluntaryRecall-07192014.pdf>.

### DISTRIBUTION

We do not have specific information regarding distribution of the recalled products in North Carolina at the moment, but based on the recall announcement, national distribution is expected. Stores where the recall has been posted include [Walmart](#), [Trader Joe's](#), Costco, [Whole Foods Market](#), and [Kroger](#).

### LISTERIOSIS

A person with listeriosis usually has fever and muscle aches, sometimes preceded by diarrhea or other gastrointestinal symptoms. Almost everyone who is diagnosed with listeriosis has "invasive" infection, in which the bacteria spread beyond the gastrointestinal tract. *Listeria monocytogenes* is commonly found in soil and water. Animals can carry the bacterium without appearing ill and can contaminate foods of animal origin, such as meats and dairy products. Unlike most bacteria, *Listeria* can grow and multiply in some foods in the refrigerator. **The risk of invasive listeriosis after exposure to *Listeria monocytogenes* is very low; although exposure is common, disease is rare.**

### TESTING AND TREATMENT

The question from the public has been whether or not exposed persons should be tested and what type of specimen should be collected. The attached guidance, CDC Memo – Suggested framework for medical management listeria exposure, was established by an expert panel during the *Listeria monocytogenes* outbreak linked to cantaloupe in 2011 and is being used by CDC for this current response. It can be shared with health care providers. In summary, those who are high risk (i.e. pregnant women, immunocompromised persons, the elderly) who have been exposed AND have fever (>100.6o F, >38.1o C) and signs and symptoms consistent with invasive listeriosis, for whom no other cause of illness is known should be tested and treated for presumptive listeriosis.

Testing is not recommended for persons who have been exposed and are asymptomatic. Testing and treatment can be considered for those who have been exposed, have mild symptoms, and are afebrile. See attached document for additional details regarding various scenarios.

Although it is mentioned in the attached framework, stool cultures are not recommended for testing. Per CDC, "...it is important to note that stool testing for *Listeria* has not been evaluated as a screening tool for listeriosis and, in general, is not recommended for the diagnosis of listeriosis. Ingestion of *Listeria* occurs frequently because the bacterium is commonly present in the environment. Therefore, intermittent fecal carriage and shedding of *Listeria* is frequent (about 5% in unselected populations, but substantial variation exists) and rarely indicative of infection. Stool culture for *Listeria* may also have low sensitivity and, is not available in the vast majority of clinical laboratories."

### DATA COLLECTION

CDC is requesting completion of the attached "ProspectiveSupp Q'aire" for all new cases of listeriosis. This will need to be completed in addition to the NCEDSS surveillance form for listeriosis. Please fax completed supplemental forms to Nicole Lee at 919-733-0490 and we will forward them to CDC.

Feel free to contact Nicole Lee (nicole.lee@dhhs.nc.gov or 919-715-1162) or the epidemiologist on-call (919-733-3419) if you have additional questions.

