

Salmonella Outbreak Associated with Veggie Booty

In June 2007 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in association with state public health departments, began an investigation of a multi-state outbreak of *Salmonella* serotype Wandsworth infections, occurring primarily in toddlers and small children. As of July 3, 2007, 57 cases had been reported to the CDC from 18 states; three of those cases originated in Vermont.

Epidemiology: In early June, 2007, a gradual increase of *S.Wandsworth* infections was identified by PulseNet, the CDC's national network for foodborne disease surveillance. A case-control study was instigated by CDC. Interviews comparing foods eaten by ill and well persons indicated that consumption of Robert's American Gourmet brand Veggie Booty was statistically associated with illness. Cases ranged from <1-47 years, with a median age of 1.3 years; 54% of cases were female. Among patients for whom clinical information was available, 76% developed bloody diarrhea and 10% were hospitalized. Onset dates ranged from 3/4/07 to 6/15/07, with only 8 cases reported from 6 states before 5/1/07. There have been no deaths associated with the outbreak.

PulseNet and PFGE

PulseNet is a national network of public health and food regulatory agency laboratories coordinated by the CDC. Participants perform molecular subtyping (or "fingerprinting") by pulsed-field gel electrophoresis (PFGE) of foodborne disease-causing bacteria, including *E.Coli* O157, *Salmonella*, *Shigella* and *Listeria*. DNA "fingerprints" are submitted electronically to a database at the CDC, allowing for rapid comparison of patterns and early identification of possible outbreaks. The Vermont Department of Health Laboratory is a participant in PulseNet. To learn more about PulseNet, go to: <http://www.cdc.gov/pulsenet/index.htm>

Recall: Veggie Booty is a snack food comprised of puffed rice and corn with a vegetable coating; it is distributed nationwide and in Canada. On 6/28/07 the US Food and Drug Administration recalled all Veggie Booty. On 7/2/07, the recall was expanded to include the company's Super Veggie Tings Crunchy Corn Sticks snack food; no illnesses, however, have been associated with this product. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture has isolated the outbreak strain of *S.Wandsworth* from a sealed bag of Veggie Booty obtained from a store. Testing of other samples is currently ongoing.

Salmonella Wandsworth in Vermont: Previous to May 2007, *S.Wandsworth* had not been identified in Vermont. Between 5/07 and mid-June, Vermont identified three cases, all with the outbreak strain. Ages ranged from 16 months to six years; two cases were male. All cases experienced bloody diarrhea; one also experienced vomiting and one experienced fever. Cases were not related and originated in three counties. All three cases had eaten Veggie Booty in the week before onset of symptoms.

Recommendations: Vermonters who think they may be ill from eating Veggie Booty should contact their health care provider, and notify the health department at (802)863-7240. Persons who have any Veggie Booty or Veggie Tings snack foods in their possession should discard the product. Health care providers are asked to continue to be alert for symptoms of *Salmonella* and obtain stool specimens for the organism when indicated. For specimen collection kits, call the VDH Laboratory at 863-7560.

The Infectious Disease Bulletin can be viewed at:

<http://healthvermont.gov/pubs/IDB/index.aspx>

For questions & comments, please contact Mary Spayne at (802)863-7240

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