

Multistate Outbreak of Human *Salmonella* Heidelberg Infections

CDC is collaborating with public health officials in many states and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA-FSIS) to investigate a multistate outbreak of *Salmonella* Heidelberg infections that is likely caused by eating ground turkey. The outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Heidelberg is resistant to many commonly prescribed antibiotics; this antibiotic resistance can increase the risk of hospitalization or possible treatment failure in infected individuals.

A total of 77 persons infected with the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Heidelberg have been reported from 26 states between March 1 and August 1, 2011. Among persons for whom information is available, illnesses began on or after March 9, 2011. Ill persons range in age from less than 1 year to 88 years old, with a median age of 23 years old. Forty-eight percent are female. Among the 58 ill persons with available information, 22 (38%) have been hospitalized. One death has been reported.

Advice to Consumers, Retailers, and Others

- Wash hands, kitchen work surfaces, and utensils with soap and water immediately after they have been in contact with raw meat or poultry including frozen, fresh ground turkey. Then, disinfect the food contact surfaces using a freshly prepared solution of 1 tablespoon unscented liquid chlorine bleach to 1 gallon of water.



- Cook poultry thoroughly. Ground turkey and ground turkey dishes should always be cooked to 165 °F internal temperature as measured with a food thermometer; leftovers also should be reheated to 165 °F. The color of cooked poultry is not always a sure sign of its safety. Only by using a food thermometer can one accurately determine that poultry has reached a safe minimum internal temperature of 165 °F throughout the product. Turkey can remain pink even after cooking to a safe minimum internal temperature of 165 °F. The meat of smoked turkey is always pink. Be particularly careful with foods prepared for infants, older adults, and persons with impaired immune systems. If served undercooked poultry in a restaurant, send it back to the kitchen for further cooking.



- Cross-contamination of foods should be avoided. Uncooked meats should be kept separate from produce, cooked foods, and ready-to-eat foods. Hands, cutting boards, counters, knives, and other utensils should be washed thoroughly after touching uncooked foods. Hands should be washed before handling food, and between handling different food items.
- Refrigerate raw and cooked meat and poultry within 2 hours after purchase (one hour if temperatures exceed 90° F). Refrigerate cooked meat and poultry within two hours after cooking. Refrigerators should be set to maintain a temperature of 41 °F or below.
- Persons who think they might have become ill from eating possibly contaminated ground turkey should consult their health care providers. Infants, older adults, and persons with impaired immune systems are more likely than others to develop severe illness.

