

Peaches Suspected in Salmonella Outbreak in 9 States

The FDA states that Wawona brand peaches should be discarded and not be sold, served, or eaten. Getty Images

Bagged peaches produced by the brand Wawona and sold at select ALDI stores may be linked to a new salmonella outbreak that's sickened 68 people across nine states.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is advising people not to sell, serve, or eat the peaches.

Experts say most salmonella infections clear up in a week or so. However, if symptoms are severe or last longer than a week, seek medical attention.

Peaches may be the latest food behind a new multistate salmonella outbreak.

After 68 people in nine states fell ill with salmonella infections, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) launched an investigation to determine whether bagged peaches may be the culprit.

Fourteen people have been hospitalized. No deaths have been reported.

The Wawona brand peaches have been voluntarily recalled and removed from the shelves of certain ALDI grocery stores.

The FDA is urging people not to eat, sell, or serve the potentially contaminated peaches.

The peaches under investigation

The peaches under question were produced by the brand Wawona and sold at certain ALDI stores located in Connecticut, Iowa, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, Wisconsin, and West Virginia.

They were sold between June 1, 2020, and through this week in 2-pound clear, plastic bags.

The FDA is advising anyone who bought the peaches to discard them.

Any areas the peaches may have touched, including countertops, refrigerators, cutting boards, fruit slicers, and storage bins, should be sanitized as well.

“FDA recommends that anyone who received Wawona brand bagged peaches from ALDI use extra vigilance in cleaning and sanitizing any surfaces and containers that may have come in contact with the produce to reduce the risk of cross-contamination,” the agency stated in its news release.

What to know about salmonella

Salmonella is a relatively common foodborne illness, according to Dr. Amesh Adalja, an infectious disease physician and senior scholar for Johns Hopkins University Center for Health Security in Maryland.

An estimated 1.3 million salmonella cases with 26,500 hospitalizations and 420 deaths are reported each year in the United States.

Salmonella infection typically involves abdominal pain, diarrhea, and occasionally a fever.

Symptoms usually appear 6 hours to 6 days after the contaminated food is eaten.

Adults 65 years old and up are considered to be at risk for salmonella infections as are children and people with compromised immune systems from health conditions such as diabetes, cancer, and liver or kidney disease.

“It can be dangerous in the immunocompromised and those at the extremes of age, where it can spread to the bloodstream,” Adalja told [name removed].

When to go to the emergency room

Salmonella infections usually clear up in about a week.

“Most people with salmonella infections recover by taking medicine to control nausea and fever and by drinking fluids,” Dr. Robert Glatter, an emergency physician at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City, told [name removed].

Those who experience persistent, severe symptoms should seek medical care, as doctors may want to prescribe antibiotics.

Adalja said people “experiencing abdominal pain, unremitting fever, or voluminous diarrhea” should be evaluated by a healthcare provider.

If you can drink water and your symptoms improve, you can safely recover at home, Glatter added.

Concerns over COVID-19

During the pandemic, some people may be concerned about visiting the emergency department due to potential exposure to COVID-19.

Many health experts believe that delaying necessary treatment is riskier than potentially being exposed to the new coronavirus.

Delaying treatment for a severe salmonella infection that may have spread to the bloodstream can be life threatening.

“Fear of COVID-19 should not deter you from being evaluated and treated. Your health and safety is a priority,” Glatter said.

Hospitals have put strict safety protocols in place to ensure patients in the emergency room have minimal risk for exposure to the new coronavirus.

Surfaces are frequently sanitized, healthcare providers and other patients are required to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks, and physical distancing measures are in place.

In many hospitals, people who may have COVID-19 are separated from patients with other issues.

“The bottom line is this: It’s safe to go to the ER,” Glatter said.