



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF

HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

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Commissioner

2021 ALERT # 34

Investigation of a Listeriosis Cluster in Brooklyn

Please Share this Alert with All Primary Care, Family Medicine, Emergency Medicine, Internal Medicine, Infectious Disease, Intensive Care, Laboratory Medicine, and Infection Control Staff in Your Facility

- **The Health Department is investigating a cluster of three listeriosis patients with clinical isolates highly related by whole genome sequencing who all reside in Brooklyn.**
- **All three patients purchased ready-to-eat food from the deli counter at the same NetCost Market located at 3100 Ocean Ave in Brooklyn.**
 - NetCost management has worked closely with the Health Department and New York State Agriculture and Markets to ensure that the deli area is safe for consumers at this time.
- **Patrons who have purchased food from this deli counter before 9/5/2021 should not eat the food and throw it out.**
- **Providers should consider listeriosis when evaluating patients who report eating food from a deli counter prior to illness and present with fever, diarrhea, and other symptoms consistent with *Listeria* infection and request testing and treatment for *Listeria*.**
- **Providers and laboratories should report all confirmed cases of listeriosis to the New York City Health Department and laboratories should continue to send clinical isolates to the Public Health Laboratory for additional subtyping.**

September 10, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

The New York City (NYC) Health Department is investigating a cluster of three patients who tested positive for *Listeria monocytogenes* and whose clinical isolates are highly related to each other by whole genome sequencing (WGS). All three patients reside in Brooklyn. Diagnosis dates for these patients ranged from 6/30/21 – 7/20/21 and all were ≥ 50 years of age. All three patients were hospitalized and there have been no deaths associated with this cluster. All three patients reported shopping at NetCost Market (3100 Ocean Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11235) and purchasing ready-to-eat products from the deli counter prior to illness onset. Food and environmental specimens collected at the deli area were found to be highly related to the NYC clinical isolates by WGS. Patrons who purchased ready-to-eat products from the deli at this NetCost Market prior to 9/5/2021 should discard the food immediately. NetCost management has worked closely with the Health Department and New York State Agriculture and Markets to ensure that the deli area is safe for consumers at this time.

Listeriosis, a bacterial disease caused by *Listeria monocytogenes*, is uncommon, and usually occurs sporadically. Although it can cause mild illness in immunocompetent adults, it can also cause sepsis and meningoenzephalitis in newborns and adults, and spontaneous abortion in pregnant women. Neonates, the elderly, immune compromised individuals, and pregnant women are at greatest risk for serious or fatal infection.

Foodborne outbreaks of listeriosis have been associated with ingestion of raw or contaminated milk, soft cheeses, contaminated raw vegetables, and undercooked or ready-to-eat meats such as hotdogs, luncheon meats, and refrigerated pâtés.

To help the NYC Health Department identify cases of listeriosis associated with this cluster providers should consider listeriosis if patients report consuming food from a deli counter prior to illness and present with fever, diarrhea, and other symptoms consistent with *Listeria* infection. Providers should test and treat these patients for listeriosis.

Providers are required to report all laboratory-confirmed listeriosis cases to the NYC Health Department. To report a case and for information about listeriosis, please call 866-NYC-DOH1 (1-866-692-3641). Paper Universal Reporting Forms (URFs) can be found at <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/hcp/urf-0803.pdf> OR report online at <https://a816-healthpsi.nyc.gov/NYCMED/Account/Login>.

Laboratories are required to forward all *Listeria* isolates to the Public Health Laboratory (PHL) for additional subtyping. Laboratories should send isolates with the PHL eOrder requisition form (available at <https://a816-phleorder.nyc.gov/PHLeOrder/>) to:

Public Health Laboratory
455 First Ave, Room 136
New York, NY 10016

For laboratory-related questions, please call the PHL Microbiology Section at 212-447-6783.

PHL eOrder Electronic Requisition Submission Process:

PHL test request form can be completed via eOrder. Once you have confirmed an existing facility account or created a new facility*, please follow the steps below:

- Once logged in select 'Order New Test'.
- On the Test Information page, search for and select "**Listeria Monocytogenes Isolate Serotyping**".
- Enter all the required fields in red, select 'Add Test' and press continue.
- Enter patient information and press continue.
- Review all entered information on the next page and submit the order.
- Once the test request form is completed, print the system-generated PDF and place it in the specimen bag.

*To create a new facility please refer to: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/labs/phl-eorder-new-facility-flowchart.pdf>

For additional information on test ordering please refer to:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/labs/phl-eorder-test-ordering-flowchart.pdf>

Sincerely,



Celia Quinn, MD, MPH
Deputy Commissioner
Division of Disease Control