

## **Investigation Update - Outbreak of Salmonella Typhimurium Infections**

**Samir V. Sodha, MD, MPH**

**January 23, 2009**

**NOTE: This transcript has not been reviewed by the presenter and is made available solely for your convenience. A final version of the transcript will be posted as soon as the presenter's review is complete. If you have any questions concerning this transcript please send an email to [coca@cdc.gov](mailto:coca@cdc.gov).**

Coordinator: Good afternoon and thank you for standing by. All participants will be able to listen only until the question and answer session of today's conference. If you would like to ask a question at that time please press star 1 on your touchtone phone and record your first and last name. Today's conference is being recorded, if anyone has any objections you may disconnect at this time.

Now I would like to turn the conference over to your first speaker, Miss Alycia Downs. Ma'am, you may begin.

Alycia Downs: Good afternoon and welcome to today's COCA conference call entitled Investigation Update: Outbreak of Salmonella Typhimurium Infections. We are very excited to have Dr. Samir Sodha present on this call. Dr. Sodha is a medical epidemiologist in the Division of Foodborne Bacterial and Mycotic Diseases here at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia.

We will not be using PowerPoint presentations for this call and there will be no continuing education credits or contact hours available. I will now turn the call over to Dr. Sodha.

Samir Sodha: Thank you, Alycia. There are two primary purposes of this call today: one would be to provide a brief overview of the current Salmonella Typhimurium outbreak, including background into the investigation. The second will be to

provide a very brief overview of Salmonella based on inquiries that we've been receiving here at CDC.

Let me first begin with the overview of the outbreak. CDC is currently collaborating with public health officials in many states and the United States Food and Drug Administration to investigate this multi-state outbreak of human infections due to Salmonella serotype Typhimurium. As of 9 pm Eastern Time, Thursday, January 22, 491 persons infected with the outbreak of Salmonella Typhimurium have been reported from 43 states. Additionally, one ill person was reported from Canada.

Among the persons with confirmed reported dates available illnesses began between September 14 and January 8. Patients range in age from less than 1 to 98 years and 48% were female. Among persons with available information 22% reported being hospitalized. The infection may have contributed to seven deaths. The investigation is ongoing and exposures to peanut butter and other peanut butter contained products are being examined.

There were key developments in the investigation that led to the focus on peanut butter. First CDC and public health officials from multiple states conducted a national case control study in early January to compare foods eaten by ill and well persons. Preliminary analysis from this study indicated consumption of peanut butter as a likely cause of Salmonella illness in this outbreak.

In addition, an investigation by the Minnesota Department of Health had suggested King Nut brand peanut butter was a likely source of Salmonella infection among many ill persons in Minnesota. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture laboratory isolated the outbreak strain of Salmonella

Typhimurium from an open five-pound container of King Nut brand peanut butter.

Since that time the Connecticut Department of Public Health laboratory and the Georgia Department of Agriculture have independently isolated Salmonella from unopened five-pound containers of King Nut brand peanut butter. Officials in Connecticut have identified the Salmonella found in their container as the outbreak strain. Further tests are pending in Georgia to determine if the Salmonella in their container is also the outbreak strain.

King Nut peanut butter is distributed in many states to establishments such as long-term care facilities, hospitals, schools, universities, restaurants, delis, cafeterias and bakeries. It is not sold directly to consumers and it is not known to be distributed for retail sales in grocery stores.

King Nut is produced by Peanut Corporation of America in Blakely, Georgia. This facility, which is no longer producing any products has expanded its recall to include all peanut butter and peanut paste produced at this plant since July 1, 2008. Peanut butter and peanut butter paste was not sold directly to consumers but was distributed to institutions, food service providers, food manufacturers and distributors in many states and countries.

Much of this peanut butter and peanut paste is used as an ingredient in many products including cookies, crackers, cereal, candy, ice cream, pet treats and other foods. Because of concerns about peanut butter containing foods, CDC along with (safe) partners conducted a second national case control study. Preliminary analysis of this study revealed an association between illness and consumption of pre-packaged peanut butter crackers specifically with Austin and Keebler brands.

Austin and Keebler brand peanut butter crackers are produced by the Kellogg Company in North Carolina using peanut paste from the Peanut Corporation of America. These products have been recalled by the Kellogg Company. Other peanut butter containing products produced by a variety of companies may have been made with the ingredients recalled by the Peanut Corporation of America.

CDC and state health departments continue to investigate the association of other brands and foods that contain peanut butter with illness. As of now more than 125 peanut butter containing products, including pet food treats, were produced by several companies have been identified and have been recalled by the Peanut Corporation of America.

The list of products can be found on the FDA Web site. FDA and the product manufacturers are working extensively to determine the list of affected products. Many companies have already announced whether their products include ingredients being recalled by the Peanut Corporation of America and more companies are expected to make similar announcements. The current list of recall announcements from companies can be found at the FDA Web site and continues to be revised daily.

We have the following recommendations for consumers: One, do not eat products that have been recalled and throw them away in a manner that prevents others from eating them. These products include Austin and Keebler brand peanut butter crackers and King Nut brand peanut butter produced since July 1, 2008.

Two, postpone eating other peanut butter containing products such as cookies, crackers, cereal, candy and ice cream until more information becomes available about which brands may be affected. Three, use FDA's online

database to check if foods you're concerned about are on the recall list. Four, call the Consumer Hotline phone number that may be on any product packaging you have to get information directly from the product manufacturer.

Five, persons who think that they have become ill from eating peanut butter are advised to consult their healthcare providers. And finally, persons who think their pets may have become ill from eating peanut butter or pet food treats containing peanut butter are advised to consult their veterinarians.

At this point in time I would like to provide a brief overview of Salmonella. Salmonella is a group of bacteria that can cause diarrheal illness in humans. Salmonella usually passes from the feces of people or animals to other people or other animals. There are many different kinds of Salmonella bacteria; in the United States Salmonella serotype Typhimurium and Salmonella serotype Enteritidis are the most common but there are over 2000 known serotypes.

Every year approximately 40,000 cases of Salmonella infection are reported in the United States. Because many milder cases are not diagnosed or reported the actual number of infections may be 30 or more times greater. Most people infected with Salmonella develop diarrhea, fever and abdominal cramps 12-72 hours after infection. The illness usually lasts four to seven days and most people recover without treatment.

However, in some people the diarrhea may be so severe that they may need to be hospitalized. In these patients the Salmonella infection may spread from the intestines to the blood stream causing septicemia and possibly death unless the person is treated promptly with antibiotics. The elderly, infants and those with impaired immune systems are more likely to have the severe illness.

At this point in time I would like to open it up to questions.

Alycia Downs: We can now open it up for questions. Could we please open it up for questions? If everyone could just remain on the line for one more minute we're going to try to get the line opened up for questions and answers.

Coordinator: At this time we will open the lines for questions. If you would like to ask a question please press star 1; to withdraw your question please press star 2. One moment for the first question.

Our first question. sir your line is open.

Question: Hi, I'm a communicable disease nurse for the local health department here in Oregon. And my question is that I took a list of products that are supposedly safe from the Web site, it was published by the American Peanut Council and they listed approximately 40 manufacturers of peanuts and peanut products that they are saying is safe. Are they in fact safe? Is this good information or should we still be reluctant to eat products until we know more?

Samir Sodha: Thank you for the question. And I'm not familiar with that Web site so I cannot comment on the validity of that Web site. However, we feel that the most reliable Web site to refer to is the FDA Web site and that has been organized in such a way that it's very convenient to use. It is a database there where you can try and find the products of question on that Web site to see if it's on a recall list.

And because information continues to be available on a daily basis, that Web site gets updated daily as well. And I would recommend continuing to follow up updates on that Web site.

Question cont'd: I do that daily, yes. That's where I started. Thank you very much.

Samir Sodha: Very good.

Coordinator: Thank you. Again, if you would like to ask a question please press star 1. At this time there are no further questions.

Alycia Downs: Dr. Sodha, thank you again for providing our listeners with this information. I'd also like to thank our participants for joining us today. Now if you have additional questions please send an email to [coca@cdc.gov](mailto:coca@cdc.gov), that's [COCA@cdc.gov](mailto:COCA@cdc.gov) and we'll try to get those answered.

The recording of this call and the transcript will be posted to the COCA Web site at [www.emergency.cdc.gov/coca](http://www.emergency.cdc.gov/coca) within the next week. Thank you again for participating and have a wonderful weekend.

Coordinator: Excuse me?

Alycia Downs: Yes.

Coordinator: This is the Operator; we did have a question pop up if you'd still like to take it?

Alycia Downs: Yes please.

Coordinator: Thank you, one moment; your line is open.

Question: Thank you. I had a question on the distribution date that we should pay attention to. When did the products first start being shipped and when should we use that as a cut off date?

Samir Sodha: Thank you for the question. The current recalls based on products produced after July 1.

Question cont'd: Okay.

Samir Sodha: And as I said - specified - July 1, 2008.

Question cont'd: Okay, so did that include like Christmas candies?

Samir Sodha: Yeah, a lot of that also depends on the specific manufacturer and I would recommend referring to the FDA Web site to see what the specific recall is to that manufacturer.

Question cont'd: Okay, thank you.

Samir Sodha: You're welcome.

Coordinator: We do have another question. Ma'am, your line is open.

Question: Hi, I'm sorry I thought I was cut off so I forgot the question. But I guess I was really concerned - we're being pressured a lot to put products back out on the shelves for our patients and for, you know, for the cafes and everything. And we're having letters from companies come in from (hers) and other companies saying oh, our stuff is safe; our stuff is safe. Is your best advice to still hold off for a few more months or...

Samir Sodha: Thank you for that question. And I realize it's a difficult time given the fact that information comes on a daily basis and so it's hard to keep up. But because of that we - at CDC we're not providing those guidelines and I would

recommend that you refer to the FDA Web site to see what their current recommendations are.

It is difficult because new information comes in daily and so FDA has to update their guidelines as well and specifically the recalls from companies gets updated daily as well and so it's just a question of keeping on top of that at this point in time.

Question cont'd: And the FDA Web site is just - just Google in FDA and search peanut butter and it'll come up that way or is there a specific...

Samir Sodha: That's a very good question and you can Google it but alternatively you can type in [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov) and that will get to the homepage for FDA and currently the Salmonella Typhimurium outbreak is on the front - homepage and pretty prominently there at the very top of the page with a picture.

Question cont'd: Thank you because I know that Web site can be fairly difficult. Thank you.

Coordinator: The next question, sir, your line is open.

Question: Hello?

Samir Sodha: Yes?

Question cont'd: I just wanted to ask, like the tomatoes and the other outbreaks we had over last year is somebody going to be able - or is there a Web site or something that we can find out when is peanut butter going to be safe again after you locate the source and stuff - currently updated because we're kind of - on the side of caution and not putting any peanut butter out in our nursing home until we know more information. Hello?

Samir Sodha: Yes, thank you for the question and I apologize if it seems a little redundant but again the FDA Web site contains better guidelines regarding that. The outbreak is still considered to be ongoing and so please keep that in mind when trying to make these decisions as well.

Your two options would be to either call the manufacturer phone number to see what they know about their supplier information towards their peanut butter. And I would highly recommend as your first choice if you go to the FDA Web site to see if that particular product is one that has been recommended be recalled.

Question cont'd: Thank you.

Coordinator: We do have one more question however the participant did not state their name so if you queued for a question your line is open.

Question: I'm sorry I think I had my mute on. My question was in regards to clarifying - you said all stock from July '08?

Samir Sodha: Yeah and we're referring to the recall - refers to products produced by the Peanut Corporation of America after July 1, 2008. Now because - we realize it's difficult for the consumer to know what came from that specific corporation that's why the FDA has gone through a lot of trouble to try to identify through their Web site and their database an easy way for consumer to identify products in question.

Coordinator: Thank you. At this time we have no further questions.

Samir Sodha: Thank you.

END