



## Outbreak Investigation of E. Coli O26 Linked to Aldi Baker's Corner Flour, May 2019

*Outbreak linked to recalled flour, investigation focuses on source and scope of contamination*

### May 24, 2019

The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA), along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and state and local partners, is investigating a multistate outbreak of *E. coli* O26 linked to ALDI's Baker's Corner flour.

The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) collected and analyzed an unopened sample of this flour and determined that the flour contained *E. coli* O26. RIDOH issued a public warning (<https://www.ri.gov/press/view/35910>) to consumers not to eat this flour on May 22, 2019.

ALDI and ADM Milling Co. announced a recall (<https://www.fda.gov/safety/recalls-market-withdrawals-safety-alerts/association-adm-milling-co-aldi-issues-isolated-recall-5-lb-bakers-corner-all-purpose-flour>) of the flour on May 22, 2019, which was supplied by an ADM Milling Co. production facility in Buffalo, N.Y. On May 23, 2019, ADM Milling Co. announced an expansion (<https://www.adm.com/news/news-releases/adm-milling-recalling-bakers-corner-all-purpose-flour-5lb-bags-packaged-for-aldi>)  (<http://www.fda.gov/about-fda/website-policies/website-disclaimer>) of the recall, and ALDI ultimately expanded ([https://corporate.aldi.us/fileadmin/fm-dam/newsroom/Product\\_Recalls/EPW\\_Response\\_Materials\\_Bakers\\_Corner\\_All\\_Purpose\\_Flower\\_05.23.19\\_Clean.pdf](https://corporate.aldi.us/fileadmin/fm-dam/newsroom/Product_Recalls/EPW_Response_Materials_Bakers_Corner_All_Purpose_Flower_05.23.19_Clean.pdf))  (<http://www.fda.gov/about-fda/website-policies/website-disclaimer>) the recall to all lots and all Best If Used By Dates.

On May 24, 2019, further DNA analysis found that the *E. coli* in the unopened sample of flour was closely related by whole genome sequencing to the strain of *E. coli* O26 that has caused an outbreak affecting 17 people in 8 states.

FDA will work with the firms to determine whether other lots of flour made at that production facility may be potentially contaminated and need to be recalled, and on trying to determine the source of the contamination.

### Recommendation:

Consumers should not use or eat flour from five-pound bags of Baker's Corner All Purpose Flour packed for ALDI, that includes all lot codes and all Best If Used By Dates distributed in Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and West Virginia.

Do not eat any raw cake mix, batter, or any other raw dough or batter product that is supposed to be cooked or baked.

Wash hands, work surfaces, and utensils thoroughly after contact with flour and raw batter or dough products.

Keep raw foods separate from other foods while preparing them to prevent any contamination that may be present from spreading. Be aware that flour or cake mix may spread easily due to its powdery nature.



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## Case Counts

Total Illnesses: 17  
Hospitalizations: 3  
Deaths: 0  
Last illness onset: April 18, 2019  
States with Cases: CA, CT, MO, NJ, NY, OH, PA, RI

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## What Products are Recalled?

ALDI and ADM Milling Co. have recalled ([https://corporate.aldi.us/fileadmin/fm-dam/newsroom/Product\\_Recalls/EPW\\_Response\\_Materials\\_Bakers\\_Corner\\_All\\_Purpose\\_Flower\\_05.23.19\\_Clean.pdf](https://corporate.aldi.us/fileadmin/fm-dam/newsroom/Product_Recalls/EPW_Response_Materials_Bakers_Corner_All_Purpose_Flower_05.23.19_Clean.pdf)) (<http://www.fda.gov/about-fda/website-policies/website-disclaimer>) all Baker's Corner All Purpose Flour sold at ALDI retail locations in the Northeastern United States due to a potential presence of *E. coli*. The UPC code is 041498130404.

This product was distributed to select ALDI stores in 11 states: Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and West Virginia.

## What is E. coli?

*E. coli* are mostly harmless bacteria that live in the intestines of people and animals and contribute to intestinal health. However, eating or drinking food or water contaminated with certain types of *E. coli* can cause mild to severe gastrointestinal illness. Some types of pathogenic (illness-causing) *E. coli*, such as Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC), can be life-threatening.

People infected with pathogenic *E. coli* can start to notice symptoms anywhere from a few days after consuming contaminated food or as much as nine days later. Generally, the symptoms include severe stomach cramps, diarrhea, fever, nausea, and/or vomiting.

The severity or presence of certain symptoms may depend on the type of pathogenic *E. coli* causing the infection. Some infections can cause severe bloody diarrhea and lead to life-threatening conditions, such as a type of kidney failure called hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), or the development of high blood pressure, chronic kidney disease, and neurologic problems. Other infections may have no symptoms or may resolve without medical treatment within five to seven days.

Due to the range in severity of illness, people should consult their health care provider if they suspect that they have developed symptoms that resemble an *E. coli* infection., including HUS, but even healthy older children and young adults can become seriously ill.

People of any age can become infected with pathogenic *E. coli*. Children under the age of 5 years, adults older than 65, and people with weakened immune systems are more likely to develop severe illness as a result of an *E. coli* infection. However, even healthy older children and young adults can become seriously ill.

## What Else Should Restaurants and Retailers Do?

In the event that retailers and/or other food service operators are found to have handled recalled or other potentially contaminated food in their facilities, they should:

- Contact their local health department and communicate to their customers regarding possible exposure to *E. coli*.
- Wash the inside walls and shelves of the refrigerator, cutting boards and countertops, and utensils that may have contacted contaminated foods; then sanitize them with a solution of one tablespoon of chlorine bleach to one gallon of hot water; dry with a clean cloth or paper towel that has not been previously used.
- Wash and sanitize display cases and surfaces used to potentially store, serve, or prepare potentially contaminated foods.
- Wash hands with warm water and soap following the cleaning and sanitation process.
- Conduct regular frequent cleaning and sanitizing of cutting boards and utensils used in processing to help minimize the likelihood of cross-contamination.

## What Else Should Consumers Do?

People should consult their healthcare provider if they suspect that they have developed symptoms that resemble an *E. coli* infection.

Consumers should follow these steps for preventing foodborne illness:

- Wash the inside walls and shelves of the refrigerator, cutting boards and countertops, and utensils that may have contacted contaminated foods; then sanitize them with a solution of one tablespoon of chlorine bleach to one gallon of hot water; dry with a clean cloth or paper towel that has not been previously used.
- Wash and sanitize surfaces used to serve or store potentially contaminated products.
- Wash hands with warm water and soap following the cleaning and sanitation process.

Consumers can also submit a voluntarily report (</food/resources-you/industry-and-consumer-assistance-cfsan>), a complaint, or adverse event (illness or serious allergic reaction) related to a food product.

## Who to Contact

**Consumers who have symptoms** (</food/foodborne-pathogens/escherichia-coli-e-coli>) should contact their health care provider to report their symptoms and receive care.

To report a **complaint** or **adverse event** (illness or serious allergic reaction), you can

- Call an FDA Consumer Complaint Coordinator (</safety/report-problem/consumer-complaint-coordinators>) if you wish to speak directly to a person about your problem.
- Complete an electronic Voluntary MedWatch form (<https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/medwatch/medwatch-online.htm>) online.
- Complete a paper Voluntary MedWatch form (</media/85598/download>) that can be mailed to FDA.

Visit [www.fda.gov/fcic](http://www.fda.gov/fcic) (<http://www.fda.gov/fcic>) for additional consumer and industry assistance.

**Submit Questions Electronically** (<https://cfsan.secure.force.com/InquiryPage>) [⌄](http://www.fda.gov/about-fda/website-policies/website-disclaimer) (<http://www.fda.gov/about-fda/website-policies/website-disclaimer>)

**Get E-mail Updates** (</about-fda/contact-fda/get-email-updates>)

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## Additional Information

- ALDI Recall Notice ([https://corporate.aldi.us/fileadmin/fm-dam/newsroom/Product\\_Recalls/EPW\\_Response\\_Materials\\_Bakers\\_Corner\\_All\\_Purpose\\_Flower\\_05.23.19\\_Clean.pdf](https://corporate.aldi.us/fileadmin/fm-dam/newsroom/Product_Recalls/EPW_Response_Materials_Bakers_Corner_All_Purpose_Flower_05.23.19_Clean.pdf)) [⌄](http://www.fda.gov/about-fda/website-policies/website-disclaimer) (<http://www.fda.gov/about-fda/website-policies/website-disclaimer>)
- ADM Milling Co. Recall Notice (<https://www.adm.com/news/news-releases/adm-milling-recalling-bakers-corner-all-purpose-flour-5lb-bags-packaged-for-aldi>) [⌄](http://www.fda.gov/about-fda/website-policies/website-disclaimer) (<http://www.fda.gov/about-fda/website-policies/website-disclaimer>)
- RIDOH Public Warning (<https://www.ri.gov/press/view/35910>)
- CDC Outbreak Page (<https://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/2019/flour-05-19/index.html>)
- FDA – *E. coli* (</food/foodborne-pathogens/escherichia-coli-e-coli>)
- FoodSafety.gov – *E. coli* (<https://www.foodsafety.gov/poisoning/causes/bacteriaviruses/ecoli/index.html>)
- CDC – *E. coli* (STEC) ([https://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/general/index.html#what\\_shiga](https://www.cdc.gov/ecoli/general/index.html#what_shiga))
- FDA Consumer Update: Raw Dough's a Raw Deal and Could Make You Sick (</consumers/consumer-updates/raw-doughs-raw-deal-and-could-make-you-sick>)