Salmonellosis Outbreak Associated with a Pop-up Food Pantry

PulseNet/OutbreakNet Regional Meeting
Omaha, Nebraska
March 7, 2019

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Outbreak Detection

• A local health department called the Department of Health Services (DHS) on May 23, 2018.

• Three salmonellosis cases reported obtaining food from Ruby’s Pantry on April 28, 2018.

• Case-patient specimens were culture confirmed.
  o *Salmonella* Enteritidis JEGX01.0004
  o Previous outbreaks have been linked to poultry, eggs, and chicken.
Ruby’s Pantry Information

• Food pantry with “pop-up” sites in MN and WI
  o Over 70 total locations
  o Churches or community buildings
  o “Pop-up” stops run by volunteers
• Donated food stored in two warehouses (MN and WI)
• Food was trucked to mobile pantry “pop-up” locations
Next Steps

• Notified partners:
  o Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP)
  o Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)
  o Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA)
  o CDC
  o USDA-FSIS

• Contacted Ruby’s Pantry
  o Agreed to halt the distribution of raw chicken products
  o Offered to contact patrons

• Issued joint press release (DHS and MDH) on June 1, 2018
Case Finding Summary-WI

• 34 WI pantry patrons were interviewed.

• 5 patrons had culture confirmed *Salmonella* infections linked to 2 Ruby’s Pantry locations
  - Onset dates 5/2–5/31
  - 20% female
  - Median age: 54 years
  - 4 hospitalized
  - All cases were *Salmonella Enteritidis* JEGX01.0004
Patron Interviews

• Patrons described products as “chicken patties” and “chicken tenders.”

• Patrons reported that chicken products did not have labels or cooking instructions.

• Some patrons reported cooking raw chicken in the microwave.

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Image: THE RAW STORY

Some frozen chicken entrees look like they’re cooked—but they’re not!

- **Handle raw frozen chicken** — including frozen meals, entrees, and appetizers — the same way you handle raw fresh chicken to prevent foodborne illness.

1. **Read the package carefully.**
2. **Follow cooking instructions exactly as written.**
3. **Use a food thermometer to check doneness (165°F for chicken).**
4. **Clean and disinfect any surfaces and utensils that touched the raw product.**
5. **Wash your hands with soap and water after handling the raw product.**

Learn more: [www.cdc.gov/foodsafety](http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety)
Product Testing

- Meatballs and frozen breaded chicken were collected for testing.
- Two frozen breaded chicken samples were positive for *Salmonella* Enteritidis JEGX01.0004.
Laboratory Analysis

Both chicken and patient isolates were matches by whole genome sequencing (WGS).

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Environmental Health Findings

• Unlicensed Food Warehouse in Waupaca, WI

• Orders to work with the operator to ensure food that was safe for consumption was available to distribute

• Pantries served vulnerable populations and food security became a significant consideration
Environmental Health Findings

• Food Pantry supplies are delivered the day of the event in a refrigerated truck
  o Products are off loaded hours before distribution
  o Hazardous products cold held using refrigerated blankets

• Bulk food was divided into smaller portions for distribution.
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Environmental Health Findings

- Onsite visits of several food pantries were conducted
- Pop-up pantries had a similar set up amongst the sites
- Operations varies greatly between each pop-up pantry

Ruby's Pop-Up Pantry
Food Liability Waiver

EVEN

Date: ___________________________  Pop-Up Pantry Site: ___________________________

I WILL NOT hold Ruby’s Pantry/Ruby's Heart, their agents or representatives liable for damages or liabilities incurred as a result of the items or products given to me as a donation. All food and/or items are given to me, as if with any and all faults and/or defects, as a donation. I understand that the final judgment of quality or suitability for use is with the person accepting the donation. This food and/or items are distributed as a donation for personal use only and will NOT BE SOLD UNDER ANY CONDITION. I am 18 years of age or older. I grant full permission for Ruby’s Pantry and the local sponsoring organization to use any photograph, film, video or audio tapes of me for promotional purposes.

Guest Sign-In

Non-Refundable Donation

| 62. | 92. |
Environmental Health Findings

• Products were unlabeled and lacked information on:
  o Ingredients.
  o Cooking instructions.
  o Storage instructions.
  o Raw versus cooked product.
Outbreak Continuation

• In October 2018, another case was linked to a third WI Ruby’s Pantry stop.
  o Reported obtaining and consuming breaded chicken products from Ruby’s in July 2018.
  o Patient’s isolate closely related to other outbreak case-patients by WGS.

• The same chicken product was also linked to a *Salmonella* outbreak at a different food pantry in WI.
  o Product was properly labeled and obtained in August 2018
  o Four cases linked in November 2018 after WGS