

Meat recall: Cook bird thoroughly and wash your hands, expert warns

11 August 2011

It's grilling season. Do you know if your turkey burgers are safe to eat?

In the third-largest recall in U.S. history, ground turkey is being pulled from store shelves in Cook, DuPage and Will counties and four other Illinois locations because of [salmonella](#) poisoning.

"This is the biggest Class I recall to date and involves some 36 million pounds of ground turkey that may be contaminated with a multi-drug-resistant strain of Salmonella Heidelberg. This is a lot of meat with a reasonably high health hazard of food poisoning. No one is happy when eating food can cause health problems or death," said Dr. Jorge Parada, director of infection prevention and control of Loyola University Health System.

"Almost 2,500 strains of salmonella exist, but Salmonella Heidelberg is more resistant than most strains and has been identified in all cases in this outbreak."

Cargill has recalled 36 million lbs. of ground turkey due to salmonella poisoning. Nearly 80 people from 26 states have come down with salmonella poisoning; one person has died.

"By following some basic rules of good hygiene and carefully adhering to basic cooking guidelines, most people will avoid illness," he said. "Cook meat thoroughly. During preparation, keep raw meat separate from foods that will not be cooked and do not share utensils, such as cutting boards."

Do I Have Salmonella Poisoning?

Dr. Parada said that people with salmonella poisoning can suffer various symptoms, including upset stomach, abdominal cramping, diarrhea and fever that occurs 12 to 72 hours after eating tainted meat.

Be prepared to spend 4 to 7 days

recovering. You'll need to rest and drink lots of fluids.

Hospitalization due to salmonella poisoning is rare but the young, old and chronically ill need to be very careful about dehydration due to diarrhea.

Antibiotics are sometimes used to treat those who have salmonella poisoning, but most people who are in good health will be able to recover without medication.

How to Prevent Salmonella Poisoning

In addition to checking your kitchen for recalled Cargill ground turkey products, Dr. Parada recommended these tips to prevent of salmonella poisoning:

Make sure raw turkey is refrigerated within two hours after purchase, or one hour if temperatures exceed 90 degrees Fahrenheit.

Cook ground turkey to a minimum internal temperature of 165 degrees to kill salmonella bacteria. Use a meat thermometer for accuracy. Don't "guesstimate."

Keep raw ground turkey separate from foods that will not be cooked, such as fruits and vegetables, to avert potential contamination.

Wash hands, utensils and cookware with soap and water after any contact with raw turkey.

Salmonella Is Not Uncommon

Dr. Parada said 10 to 15 percent of ground turkey in the U.S is contaminated with salmonella, making it one of the most difficult food pathogens to control.

"Ground turkey is perceived as a more healthful alternative to ground beef, so popularity has soared, especially in this, our primary grilling

season," Dr. Parada said. "People need to follow proper food-preparation precautions so that it remains a healthy source of protein."

List of Recalled Ground Turkey

This recall affects more than 25 different types of fresh and frozen ground turkey products produced at Cargill's Springdale, Ark., plant between Feb. 20 and Aug. 2.

All packages contain the code "Est. P-963," Cargill said.

Here is the full list of recalled products:

Ground Turkey Chubs - Use or Freeze by Dates of 2/20/11 through 8/23/11

10 lb. chubs of Honeysuckle White Fresh Natural Lean Ground Turkey with Natural Flavorings

10 lb. chubs of Unbranded Ground Turkey w/ Natural Flavoring 2 Pack

80 oz. chubs of Riverside Ground Turkey with Natural Flavoring

10 lb. chubs of Natural Lean Ground Turkey with Natural Flavorings

16 oz. chubs of Fresh Lean HEB Ground Turkey 93/7

16 oz. chubs of Fresh HEB Ground Turkey 85/15

16 oz. chubs of Honeysuckle White 93/7 Fresh Ground Turkey with Natural Flavoring

4-1 lb. packages of Honeysuckle White Ground Turkey with Natural Flavoring Value Pack

16 oz. chubs of Honeysuckle White 85/15 Fresh Ground Turkey

48 oz. chubs of Honeysuckle White 85/15 Fresh Ground Turkey

85% Ground Turkey - Use or Freeze by Dates of 2/20/11 through 8/23/11

19.2 oz. trays of Honeysuckle White 85/15 Ground Turkey

19.2 oz. trays of Honeysuckle White Taco Seasoned Ground Turkey Colored with Paprika

19.2 oz. trays of Kroger Ground Turkey Fresh 85/15

48 oz. trays of Kroger Ground Turkey Fresh 85/15

20 oz. trays of Honeysuckle White 85/15 Ground Turkey

48 oz. trays of Honeysuckle White 85/15 Ground Turkey Family Pack

16 oz. trays of Honeysuckle White 85/15 Ground Turkey

19.2 oz. trays of Honeysuckle White Seasoned Italian-Style Ground Turkey with Natural Flavorings

20 oz. trays of Safeway Fresh Ground Turkey with Natural Flavorings * 15% Fat

93% Ground Turkey - Use or Freeze by Dates of 2/20/11 through 8/23/11

19.2 oz. trays of Honeysuckle White 93/7 Lean Ground Turkey

48 oz. trays of Honeysuckle White 93/7 Lean Ground Turkey Family Pack

19.2 oz. trays of Fit & Active Lean Ground Turkey 93/07

19.2 oz. trays of Giant Eagle Ground Turkey Fresh & Premium Lean

19.2 oz. trays of Kroger Ground Turkey Fresh Lean 93/7

20 oz. trays of Honeysuckle White 93/7 Lean Ground Turkey

Provided by Loyola University Health System

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