

# Outbreak of *Salmonella* Infections Linked to Gravel Ridge Farms Shell Eggs



## Food Safety Alert

Posted September 10, 2018 at 4:30 PM ET

**CDC, public health and regulatory officials in several states, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are investigating a multistate outbreak of *Salmonella* Enteritidis infections linked to shell eggs produced by Gravel Ridge Farms.**

Advice to Consumers, Restaurants, and Retailers

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### At A Glance

- [Reported Cases](#): 14
- [States](#): 2
- Hospitalizations: 2
- Deaths: 0
- Recall: Yes



- On September 8, 2018, Gravel Ridge Farms [recalled](#) cage-free large eggs because they might be contaminated with *Salmonella*.
- Do not eat, sell, or serve recalled Gravel Ridge Farms cage-free large eggs.
  - Gravel Ridge Farms recalled packages of a dozen and 2.5 dozen eggs in cardboard containers with UPC code 7-06970-38444-6.

- Recalled eggs have “best if used by” dates of July 25, 2018 through October 3, 2018.
- Recalled eggs were sold in grocery stores and to restaurants in Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee. For a full list of locations where recalled eggs were sold, visit the [FDA website](#).
- Return any Gravel Ridge Farms eggs to the store for a refund or throw them away, regardless of the “best if used by” date. Even if some eggs were eaten and no one got sick, do not eat them.
- Wash and sanitize drawers or shelves in refrigerators where recalled eggs were stored. Follow these [five steps to clean your refrigerator](#).
- Contact a healthcare provider if you think you got sick from eating recalled Gravel Ridge Farms shell eggs.
- Consumers and restaurants should always [handle and cook eggs safely](#) to avoid foodborne illness from raw eggs. It is important to handle and prepare all fresh eggs and egg products carefully.
- Eggs should be cooked until both the yolk and white are firm. Scrambled eggs should not be runny. Egg dishes such as casseroles and quiches should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160°F or hotter.
- Make sure that foods that contain raw or lightly cooked eggs, such as eggs over easy or hollandaise sauce, are made only with pasteurized eggs. Pasteurization kills disease-causing germs.
- Wash hands and items that came into contact with raw eggs—including countertops, utensils, dishes, and cutting boards—with soap and water.

## Latest Outbreak Information

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- 14 people infected with the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Enteritidis have been reported from two states.
- Illnesses started on dates ranging from July 10, 2018 to August 7, 2018.
- Two people have been hospitalized. No deaths have been reported.
- [Epidemiologic and traceback evidence](#) indicates that shell eggs from Gravel Ridge Farms are a likely source of the outbreak.
- On September 8, 2018, Gravel Ridge Farms recalled cage-free large eggs because they might be contaminated with *Salmonella*.
- This investigation is ongoing, and CDC will provide updates when more information is available.

## Symptoms of *Salmonella* Infection

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- Most people infected with *Salmonella* develop diarrhea, fever, and stomach cramps 12 to 72 hours after being exposed to the bacteria.
- The illness usually lasts 4 to 7 days, and most people recover without treatment.
- In some people, the diarrhea may be so severe that the patient needs to be hospitalized. *Salmonella* infection may spread from the intestines to the bloodstream and then to other places in the body.
- Children younger than 5 years, adults older than 65 years, and people with weakened immune systems are more likely to have a severe illness.

## Investigation Details

### September 10, 2018

CDC, public health and regulatory officials in several states, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are investigating a multistate outbreak of *Salmonella* Enteritidis infections.

Public health investigators are using the [PulseNet](#) system to identify illnesses that may be part of this outbreak. PulseNet is the national subtyping network of public health and food regulatory agency laboratories coordinated by CDC. DNA fingerprinting is performed on *Salmonella* bacteria isolated from ill people by using techniques called [pulsed-field gel electrophoresis](#) (PFGE) and [whole genome sequencing](#) (WGS). CDC PulseNet manages a national database of these DNA fingerprints to identify possible outbreaks. WGS gives a more detailed DNA fingerprint than PFGE. WGS performed on bacteria isolated from ill people showed that they were closely related genetically. This means that people in this outbreak are more likely to share a common source of infection.

As of September 7, 2018, 14 people infected with the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Enteritidis have been reported from two states. A list of the states and the number of cases in each can be found on the [Map of Reported Cases page](#).

Illnesses started on dates ranging from [July 10, 2018 to August 7, 2018](#). Ill people range in age from 1 year to 94, with a median age of 31. Fifty percent are female. Of 9 people with information available, 2 (22%) have been hospitalized. No deaths have been reported.

Illnesses that occurred after August 22, 2018, might not yet be reported due to the time it takes between when a person becomes ill and when the illness is reported. This takes an average of 2 to 4 weeks.

Please see the [Timeline for Reporting Cases of Salmonella Infection](#) for more details.

### Investigation of the Outbreak

[Epidemiologic and traceback evidence](#) indicates that shell eggs from Gravel Ridge Farms are a likely source of the outbreak.

In interviews, ill people answered [questions about the foods they ate and other exposures](#) in the week before they became ill. Thirteen of 14 (93%) people interviewed reported eating restaurant dishes made with eggs. This percentage is significantly higher than results from a [survey](#)[PDF – 787 KB] of healthy people in which 38% of respondents reported eating any eggs away from home in the week before they were interviewed. These restaurants reported using shell eggs in the dishes eaten by ill people. FDA and state partners traced the source of the shell eggs supplied to these restaurants to Gravel Ridge Farms in Cullman, Alabama.

On September 8, 2018, Gravel Ridge Farms [recalled](#) cage-free large eggs because they might be contaminated with *Salmonella* bacteria. Recalled eggs were sold in grocery stores and to restaurants in Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee. The FDA website has a [list of the grocery stores](#) where recalled eggs were sold. Consumers who have any Gravel Ridge Farms cage-free large eggs in their homes should not eat them. Return them to the store for a refund or throw them away. Restaurants and retailers should not serve or sell recalled Gravel Ridge Farms cage-free large eggs.

This investigation is ongoing, and CDC will provide updates when more information is available.