
To:	General Practices, Pharmacies, After-Hours Centres, Emergency Departments and Aged Residential Care facilities in the greater Wellington and Wairarapa regions
From:	Dr Craig Thornley, Medical Officer of Health
Date:	26 July 2020
Title:	Public Health Alert: Product recall due to possible Listeria contamination

Please distribute the following information to relevant staff in your organisation.

All public health alerts are available at www.rph.org.nz/publichealthalerts

Recall of cheeses and cheese products for Listeria

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) has issued a series of a consumer-level recalls of cheeses and some other packaged cheese-containing products due to possible contamination with *Listeria monocytogenes*.

Full details, including pictures of the products subject to recall, are available on the the MPI recalls website (<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/food-safety/food-recalls/recalled-food-products/>) under the following recall notices:

1. [Goodman Fielder various brands of cheese](#) (examples: Bouton D'Or halloumi; Ornelle halloumi; Puhoi havarti, gouda, gruyere, creamy blue, smoked cheddar; see recall notice for full details)
2. [Talbot Forest Cheese, Gibbston Valley Cheese, The Cuisine Canteen, Imperial Foods and Pams Finest brands of cheeses](#) (see recall notice for full details)
3. [LeaderBrand brand Garden Gate Crisp'n Zesty Chopped Salad 260g](#) (due to possible presence of *Listeria* in the feta cheese sachet)
4. [Pams brand Greek Salad with Red Wine Vinaigrette 295g](#) (due to possible presence of *Listeria* in the feta cheese sachet)
5. [The Whole Mix brand Moroccan Cous Cous & Chicken Snack Pot](#) (due to possible presence of *Listeria* in feta cheese in the salad)

These products are available in supermarkets and by food retailers throughout New Zealand. There have been no reports of illness associated with these products.

General points on health risks associated with Listeria

- Listeria is rarely a concern for healthy individuals who are not in groups at higher risk of infection.

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- Listeria alerts and recalls are often issued due to detection of Listeria contamination in products at a processing facility, and not because there are known cases of illness as a result.
- Routine testing or treatment for individuals in the absence of symptoms of listeriosis is not indicated

People in high risk groups

- Groups at increased risk from listeria include the following:
 - Pregnant women and their unborn babies
 - Newborn babies
 - People with weakened immune systems, including cancer patients, those with diabetes, people taking immunosuppressive treatments, people with liver or kidney disease
 - Frail older people
- Consider possible listeriosis among those in high-risk groups who develop symptoms of serious illness within 70 days of eating the food. Symptoms include fever, gastroenteritis (vomiting / diarrhoea), and CNS symptoms (headache, nausea and vomiting, photophobia, visual disturbance, reduced level of consciousness, neurological symptoms)
- Pregnant women may experience only mild flu-like symptoms (fever, muscle aches, backache, headache) but can still develop intrauterine listeria infection which can result in miscarriage, fetal death or congenital infection for the baby.
- Listeriosis is a notifiable disease. Notify on suspicion all cases of possible listeriosis among persons who have consumed the recalled food.

Distributing information about the recall

- If you provide medical services to rest homes or other long term care facilities, please ensure that these facilities are aware of this recall and of listeriosis symptoms. Any of the recalled products should not be consumed and either returned or discarded as per the recall notice advice.

Further information on Listeriosis is available at:

- <http://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/conditions-and-treatments/diseases-and-illnesses/food-and-water-borne-diseases/listeria>