

Notice to Clinicians

Newsletter of the Nunavik Department of Public Health

Salmonella Outbreak

Linked to Malichita Brand and Rudy Brand Cantaloupes

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Context

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) is working with its federal and provincial public-health partners, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) and the United States [Food and Drug Administration](#) (FDA) to investigate a salmonella outbreak.

The investigation has revealed that the consumption of *Malichita* brand and *Rudy* brand cantaloupes is the probable source of the epidemic. Secondary recalls were issued for products made with the recalled cantaloupes as well as transformed products. These include other fruits such as honeydew melons, pineapples, watermelons and various fruit platters. For more information on the recalled products, consult the notice for [Malichita brand and Rudy brand Cantaloupes recalled due to Salmonella - Canada.ca](#).

The PHAC issued a public-health notice on November 17 and updated it on December 8, 2023, warning the Canadian public not to eat, serve, use, sell or distribute *Malichita* brand or *Rudy* brand cantaloupes, any product made with cantaloupes or any recalled product.

In Canada, new diseases continue to be reported in the context of the epidemic, and serious consequences have been reported, particularly the hospitalization of 53 individuals and the death of 6 individuals.

The majority of the sickened individuals are children aged 5 years or younger or adults aged 65 years or older. Several individuals reportedly reside in a long-term care centre or a private residence for elderly persons or attend day-care.

Reminder on Salmonella

This pathogen, including typhoid and paratyphoid fever, is an intestinal infection caused by bacteria of the *Salmonella* genus. These bacteria colonize the gastrointestinal tract and are found in the feces of several animals: mammals (including humans), reptiles, amphibians and birds.

Transmission to Humans

Salmonella is acquired through the ingestion of the bacteria. These can be found on raw fruits and vegetables (for example, and especially, sprouted grains and cantaloupes), in foods (for example, raw eggs, unpasteurized dairy products, insufficiently cooked meat and poultry) and, more rarely, in well water. The bacteria can also be transmitted through direct or indirect contact (for example, contaminated hands or objects). The disease can spread as long as the bacteria are excreted in an infected case's fecal matter.

Clinical Aspects

The infection is usually characterized by rapid onset of fever, abdominal pain, diarrhea, nausea and sometimes vomiting. The symptoms appear from 6 to 72 hours after ingestion of *Salmonella* and the condition lasts from four to seven days. Asymptomatic infection is also possible. Septicemia, arthritis, osteomyelitis, meningitis and death are potential complications of the disease. In most cases, patients recover without particular treatment. However, in some cases, notably in very young children and elderly persons, the concomitant dehydration can become acute and require emergency care.

Public Health

Salmonella is a disease reportable by laboratories. An investigation is conducted by public-health authorities in the occurrence of aggregate cases or outbreaks of salmonella as well as for all cases of typhoid and paratyphoid fever.

Role of Clinicians at the Present Stage

- In case of compatible clinical signs, question patients on recent dietary history, with emphasis on consumption of *Malichita* brand and *Rudy* brand cantaloupes;
- If salmonella is suspected, perform the necessary tests;
- Report situations suspected of active transmission or situations with high risk of transmission (food handlers, health personnel or day-care or school workers) to the Department of Public Health;
- Withdraw the following from settings with potential contact with others during their contagious period: food handlers, health personnel, day-care workers or children attending day-care;
- Encourage disinfection of hands and surfaces to minimize the spread.

Useful Links

- [Public Health Notice: Outbreak of Salmonella infections linked to Malichita and Rudy brand cantaloupes - Canada.ca](#)
- [Risks of salmonellosis \(Salmonella\) - Canada.ca](#)
- [Malichita brand and Rudy brand Cantaloupes recalled due to Salmonella - Canada.ca](#)