

News



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 7, 2012

Connecticut Department of Agriculture

Contact: Bruce Sherman

(860) 713-2559

Connecticut Department of Public Health

Contact: William Gerrish

(860) 509-7270

Human Illness in Connecticut Linked to Salmonella in Recalled Dog Food State agencies urge safe handling of pet food

Hartford – The Connecticut Departments of Agriculture and Public Health are encouraging safe handling of pet food after a report of human illness in Connecticut was linked to a multistate outbreak of *Salmonella Infantis* associated with dog food.

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is working with public health departments to investigate 14 human illnesses in nine states, including Connecticut that are linked to the recalled pet food.

Multiple brands of dry pet food produced by Diamond Pet Foods at a single manufacturing facility in South Carolina have been linked to some of the human *Salmonella* infections.

The Department of Agriculture has identified approximately 70 stores in the state, most of which are feed and pet supply stores, at which the various brands of Diamond Pet Food products are sold and will be conducting inspections to determine the effectiveness of the recall.

Consumers should check their homes for recalled dog food products and discard them promptly. People who think they might have become ill after contact with dry pet food or with an animal that has eaten dry pet food should consult their health care providers.

Humans can become ill by handling pet products contaminated with *Salmonella*, and by coming in contact with pets or with surfaces that have been contaminated. Hand washing is the most effective way to prevent illness. Wash hands for 20 seconds with hot running water and soap:

- Before and after handling pet foods and treats
- After petting, touching, handling, or feeding pets, and especially after contact with feces
- Before preparing your own food and before eating

Because infants and children are especially susceptible to foodborne illness, keep them away from areas where pets are fed. Never allow them to touch or eat pet food. Surfaces exposed to the product should also be properly cleared.

Human symptoms of *Salmonella* infection include fever and gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, diarrhea, vomiting or abdominal pain. People with these symptoms should contact their healthcare providers. Gastrointestinal illness may become severe and lead to hospitalization. In these patients, the *Salmonella* infection may spread from the intestines to the blood stream, and then to other body sites and can cause death unless the person is treated promptly with antibiotics. The elderly, infants, and those with impaired immune systems are more likely to have a severe illness.

Salmonella can also sicken animals who eat food that is contaminated. Pets with *Salmonella* infections may be lethargic and have diarrhea or blood diarrhea, fever, and vomiting. Some pets will have only decreased appetite, fever, and abdominal pain. Infected but otherwise healthy pets can be carriers and infect other animals or humans. If your pet consumed the recalled product and has these symptoms, contact your veterinarian.

Consumers can find a list of the recalled brands of pet foods with their corresponding production codes at <http://diamondpetrecall.com/>.

###