

August 25, 2008

Listeria update from Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Perry Kendall:

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Maple Leaf Foods have expanded the previous public warning issued on August 19, 2008 and are now warning the public not to serve or consume any products produced at Maple Leaf's Establishment 97B plant because these products may be contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes*.

While the CFIA continues to investigate and develop the definitive list of product distribution across Canada, British Columbia's regional health authorities are proactively working to contact all health institutions, licensed residential care homes, registered assisted-living and licensed child care facilities in the province to tell them to dispose of products on the expanded recall list.

Consumers are advised to look for the code '97B', which can be found near the Best Before date on any Maple Leaf Foods product package, and return those products or throw them out. If you are in doubt about any ready-to-eat meat, it is best to throw it out.

Listeria poses a risk to the elderly, the very young, those with weakened immune systems and pregnant women. However, most healthy people exposed to Listeria are at very low risk of being affected by the bacteria.

People from at-risk groups who may have eaten contaminated products and have experienced symptoms, such as persistent fever, severe headaches, neck stiffness, nausea and vomiting, should consult their health care provider.

For further up-to-date information on Listeria, please refer to the following web sites:

British Columbia health authorities:
<http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/socsec/>

BC Centre for Disease Control
<http://www.bccdc.org/>

Canadian Food Inspection Agency
<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/concen/2008listeriae.shtml>