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Salmonella Illnesses in Multiple States may be Linked to Recently Recalled Cereal

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) today announced that at least 23 people in 14 states have been diagnosed with salmonellosis that was caused by the same strain of Salmonella that was found in the recently recalled unsweetened Puffed Rice and unsweetened Puffed Wheat Cereals produced by Malt-O-Meal.

The recalled products were distributed nationally under the Malt-O-Meal brand name as well as under private label brands including Acme, America's Choice, Food Club, Giant, Hannaford, Jewel, Laura Lynn, Pathmark, Shaw's, ShopRite, Tops and Weis Quality. The cereals have "Best If Used By" dates from April 8, 2008 (coded as "APR0808") through March 18, 2009 (coded as "MAR1809").

Consumers should throw out any product in their homes from these recalled lots. Grocery stores and other retailers should promptly remove the cereals from their shelves.

Salmonella is a type of bacteria that can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. Symptoms of foodborne Salmonella infection include nausea, vomiting, fever, diarrhea, and abdominal cramps. In persons with poor health or weakened immune systems, Salmonella can invade the bloodstream and cause life-threatening infections.

Individuals who believe they may have experienced an illness consistent with the symptoms described above after consuming a puffed wheat or puffed rice cereal made by Malt-O-Meal should contact their health care practitioner immediately and report the illness to their state or local health authorities.

On April 5, 2008, Malt-O-Meal voluntarily recalled the cereals because the company's routine testing found Salmonella in a product produced on March 24, 2008.

The FDA is working with Malt-O-Meal to determine the cause of the contamination and with the states and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to identify and prevent additional illnesses.

A full list of recalled products can be found at www.malt-o-meal.com/recallinfo.