



Recall of Peanut Products: Guidance for Consumers

RISK ALERT

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A nationwide outbreak of salmonella that has sickened hundreds of people and has been implicated in several deaths has been traced to contaminated peanut products processed by the Peanut Corporation of America (PCA), at its plant in Blakely, Georgia, and possibly at other PCA plants, as well. The products are contaminated with *Salmonella typhimurium*, which causes diarrhea, vomiting, cramps and fever. Severe cases can be deadly, especially to young and old people, or those with weak immune systems.

As a result, all food products made with peanut products handled by PCA since January 1, 2007, have been recalled and should be destroyed. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) maintains a list of recalled products, which now includes brownies, cakes, pies, candy, cookies, crackers, donuts, fruit and vegetables, ice cream, pet foods, pre-packaged meals, snack bars, snack mixes, toppings, peanut paste, peanut butter, and whole peanuts. While jars of national-brand peanut butter have been considered safe, there is now some concern that some brands have been contaminated, as well.

Although PCA processes only about one percent of all peanut products sold in the United States, the number of affected foods is staggering: as many as a thousand different products from about a hundred suppliers are affected. These food products are sold in stores across the U.S. and beyond.

The recall includes products from as far back as 2007, and many of these products have a long shelf life; thus, affected products might linger in home storage for many weeks or months.

What About Pets?

The recall includes some pet food products that contain peanut paste made by PCA. Pet owners can find a searchable list of recalled pet food products at:

<http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/peanutbutterrecall/index.cfm#PetFood>

While the risk of animals' contracting salmonellosis is minimal, there is risk to humans from handling these products. It is important for everyone, especially children, to wash their hands before and, especially, after feeding their pets. Wash pet food dishes carefully with hot soapy water.

How Can Consumers Protect Themselves?

- Check FDA's web site to determine which products have been recalled.
- Check your home food storage areas to identify any recalled products.
- Dispose of targeted products or return them to the place of purchase.
- If you are unsure about the status of any food item, discard it without opening it.
- Wash your hands after handling potentially contaminated products.
- Do not feed recalled food to pets or wild animals.
- If you or a family member may have become ill from eating peanut products, consult your health care providers.
- While shopping, look for notices that indicate how the store is handling the recall. If you are unsure about the status of any food item, do not buy it.

For More Information

The FDA has a *dedicated web page* on this topic: www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/salmonellatyp.html#news

The FDA provides a *browsable database* of peanut recalls, searchable by brand name, UPC code, and/or product description:

www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/peanutbutterrecall/index.cfm

FDA and CDC offer *updates* via Twitter, RSS, e-mail, etc. www.cdc.gov/socialmedia/

A *dedicated blog* combines relevant news from several government agencies: <http://pbrecallblog.hhs.gov/>

Consumers without internet access can phone 1-888-SAFEFOOD (1-888-723-3366) or 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636). The CDC-INFO line is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The American Peanut Council maintains a list of *peanut products that are not affected by this recall*: <http://www.peanutsusa.com/USA/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.page&pid=262>