



26th May 2019

**To: Directors of Infection Prevention and Control / Infection Control Doctors / Head of Facilities/
Head of Catering and Medical Directors**

**Subject: Risk of listeriosis in vulnerable patients from sandwiches supplied by the Good Food
Chain to NHS Trusts**

During the week commencing 20th May, an Incident Management Team that included two NHS Trusts, Public Health England, Local Authorities and the Food Standards Agency investigated cases of Listeriosis in the North West with infection likely to be acquired in hospital. On the Thursday evening the isolates of *L. monocytogenes* from all three cases were found to have an identical (unique) whole genome sequence (WGS), indicative of a common foodborne source.

This included two cases of Listeriosis notified in May, who had spent the full or part of the incubation period as inpatients in Manchester Royal Hospital; both have died with Listeriosis listed as a contributing factor in their deaths. A third case of Listeriosis with multiple admissions to Aintree University Hospital during their incubation period was identified. This patient has now been discharged. All cases had significant underlying illnesses.

As of 24th May, investigations indicate that the food of interest is a specific line of pre-packed sandwiches supplied to the NHS trusts from the Good Food Chain company. The products affected are:

- Chicken and Mayonnaise Sandwich (white bread)
- Chicken and Mayonnaise Sandwich (wholemeal bread)
- Chicken and Stuffing Sandwich (white bread)
- Chicken and Stuffing Sandwich (wholemeal bread)

The local authority and Food Standards Agency are working with the company to investigate this. As a precautionary measure, the Good Food Chain company are undertaking a precautionary withdrawal of specific sandwich lines (listed above) supplied to

your trust with use by dates of 25th, 26th and 27th May 2019. There is a potential risk that these sandwiches may be contaminated with *L. monocytogenes*. As investigations are ongoing, it is not currently possible to rule out contamination of other sandwich lines supplied by this producer.

In light of the current incident, it is important that all trusts adhere to the withdrawal and remove all sandwiches subject to the specific withdrawal.

Sandwiches are a common menu option in hospital and Trusts are advised to review their shelf life and cold chain controls for this food to the point of service to the patient. Regulation and sampling of food at the point of production or distribution cannot guarantee the absence of *Listeria*.

As it is not currently possible to rule out contamination of other sandwich lines supplied by this producer, we recommend not serving other sandwiches supplied by the Good Food Chain company to patients in vulnerable groups, such as those with significant immunosuppression until further investigations rule out the risk.

Listeriosis has a variable incubation period from 3-70 days. Due to the potentially long incubation period, patients exposed to contaminated product may develop Listeriosis up to 70 days after consuming it. Monitoring for cases linked to this recall will therefore be ongoing.

Meanwhile, PHE and the Food Standards Agency are reiterating advice for health care and social care organisations, on reducing the risk of vulnerable groups contracting listeriosis (<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/listeria-guidance-june2016-rev.pdf>).

Yours sincerely



Mark McGivern

On behalf of the Incident Management Team