



Pat Quinn, Governor
Damon T. Arnold, M.D., M.P.H., Director

525-535 West Jefferson Street • Springfield, Illinois 62761-0001 • www.idph.state.il.us

TO: Local Health Departments, Regional Offices of the Illinois Department of Public Health, Infection Control Professionals/Infection Preventionists, Infectious Disease Physicians, Hospital Laboratories

FROM: Connie Austin, D.V.M., M.P.H., Ph.D.
Epidemiologist, Communicable Disease Control Section

DATE: August 2, 2011

SUBJECT: *Salmonella* ser. Heidelberg Outbreak Linked to Ground Turkey Consumption

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and The United States Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA-FSIS) are announcing an outbreak of *S. ser. Heidelberg* (PFGE pattern, Xba1: JF6X01.0058) believed to be linked to consumption of ground turkey. The linkage between illness and ground turkey has been identified through patient interviews and from isolation of this strain of *S. ser. Heidelberg* in ground turkey samples.

There are seven matching cases in Illinois from Cass, Cook (Oak Park), DuPage, Madison, Peoria, Will and Williamson. Ages ranged from three to 60 years of age. Six were male and one was female. Several of the Illinois cases reported eating ground turkey prior to onset of illness. The onset dates ranged from March 21 through June 29, 2011.

Ground turkey must be cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 165° Fahrenheit to kill *Salmonella* bacteria. A food thermometer should be used to check the temperature as color is not always an indicator of doneness. Also, consumers should make sure that raw poultry and its juices do not come into contact with produce, cooked foods or food that is ready to eat. After handling raw poultry, hands should be properly washed with soap and water. Any items used to prepare the raw poultry such as cutting boards, utensils and plates should be thoroughly washed before re-using.

Laboratories are asked to report *Salmonella* cases to their local health department and forward *Salmonella* isolates as soon as possible to the Illinois Department of Public Health laboratories for serotyping and pulse field gel electrophoresis (PFGE).

For local health departments who have a case of *S. ser. Heidelberg* with this PFGE pattern we are asking that they interview cases with a standardized questionnaire,

available from the IDPH. If the person has ground turkey left that they consumed prior to illness the LHD should contact the IDPH Food and Dairy Division to request testing.

More information on this outbreak can be obtained from CDC's website (<http://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/heidelberg/index.html>) and USDA's website ([http://www.fsis.usda.gov/news & events/NR_072911_01/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/news_&_events/NR_072911_01/index.asp)).

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.