October 17, 2019

TO: Logan View Parents, Students, and Staff
FROM: Jeremy Klein, Superintendent
RE: Listeria Monocytogenes Contamination – Monday, October 14th

On Thursday, October 17th we were notified by Bernard Food Industries Inc. that a food product our lunch program had purchased from them was being recalled due to a possible Listeria monocytogenes contamination. Listeria monocytogenes is a common bacteria that can cause the illness referred to as Listeriosis, usually through the consumption of contaminated foods. Listeriosis is a rare illness but it can lead to serious health complications. Those most susceptible to the Listeriosis illness are pregnant women, very young children, the elderly, or those with weakened immune systems. Symptoms of Listeriosis can appear 3 days to 70 days after exposure to the Listeria bacteria but the average incubation period is approximately 3 weeks. Common symptoms include fever, muscle aches, chills, nausea, or diarrhea. A more detailed fact sheet on Listeriosis is attached to this letter.

The food product subject to the recall is made by Ventura Foods and the specific product is sold to us as Ventura Foods Classic Gourmet Select Chicken Base. This specific product is used to make chicken-flavored gravy. Ventura Foods identified three lot codes that they suspect may have been contaminated with the bacteria; we had purchased two containers of this product having one of those lot code numbers. All of the food product that is subject to the recall that was in our possession at the time we were notified of the recall has been disposed of according to a protocol provided to us by the Nebraska Department of Education’s Food and Nutritional Services Office.

Prior to our being notified of the recall by Bernard Foods, the recalled product was used in one instance to make gravy that was served with lunch this past Monday, October 14th. This is the only instance where the recalled product was used in the preparation, the serving, and the consumption of food here at Logan View. Only the gravy that was served from the high school kitchen that day was made with the product subject to the recall. Gravy was made and served from the elementary kitchen that day, but the gravy served from the elementary kitchen was made with a product having different lot numbers and not subject to the recall. Therefore, the potential exposure is limited to only those persons who would have eaten lunch in the high school cafeteria on Monday, October 14th.
We believe that the threat of Listeria bacteria exposure to those that would have eaten from the high school kitchen on Monday, October 14th had been greatly mitigated by our conventional food preparation and sanitation practices and procedures. A heating temperature of 165 degrees is the standard for killing Listeria bacteria that may be present in food. Our records indicate that the gravy prepared with the recalled product was thoroughly heated to a temperature of 169 degrees prior to being served to students. Our food preparation and handling practices would have also greatly reduced or eliminated the potential for cross contamination from the recalled food product during prep or handling stages, as well.

I encourage you to contact me at 402-654-3317 if you have any questions. You can also contact our school nurse, Mrs. Liesa Miller, if you have general questions about the Listeriosis illness. If you have very specific questions or concerns about Listeriosis or if you suspect that you or your child may have contracted Listeriosis, you should immediately contact your healthcare provider.

Respectfully,
Jeremy Klein
Superintendent


What is listeriosis?
Listeriosis is a serious infection caused by eating meats or unpasteurized dairy products contaminated with the bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes*.

Who gets listeriosis?
Listeriosis primarily affects people to be considered "at risk" such as pregnant women and their unborn babies, newborns, and adults with weakened immune systems.

What are the symptoms?
The symptoms of listeriosis may include sudden onset of fever, muscle aches, chills, and sometimes nausea or diarrhea. If the infection spreads to the nervous system, serious complications such as stiff neck, headache, confusion, convulsions and coma may occur. Infected pregnant women may experience only a mild gastrointestinal illness, but *Listeria* can be transmitted to the fetus through the placenta even if the mother is not showing signs of illness. This can lead to infections in the newborn, premature delivery, miscarriage or stillbirth.

How long after exposure do symptoms occur?
During outbreaks, cases have occurred between 3-70 days after eating a contaminated product. The average time between exposure to a contaminated food product and onset of illness is estimated to be approximately three weeks.

How is listeriosis diagnosed?
Listeriosis is confirmed by culturing *Listeria monocytogenes* from blood, spinal fluid, placenta or other sites of infection.

How is listeriosis treated?
Your physician can prescribe specific antibiotics for the treatment of listeriosis. When pregnant women with listeriosis are given antibiotics, in most cases the antibiotics will prevent infection of the fetus or newborn.

Where are these bacteria found? How does it get into food?
*Listeria* is found in many areas of the environment including soil, groundwater, vegetables or other plants. Animals and people can carry *Listeria* in their intestines without becoming sick. *Listeria* can be found in a variety of raw foods, such as uncooked meats and vegetables, as well as in processed foods that become contaminated after processing, such as soft cheeses and cold cuts at the deli counter. *Listeria* can also be found in unpasteurized milk or foods made from unpasteurized milk.

What about refrigerated foods?
Unlike most other bacteria that cause foodborne illnesses such as Salmonella or E. coli 0157:H7, *Listeria* can grow under refrigeration. *Listeria* is killed by pasteurization and cooking; however, in some ready-to-eat foods such as hot dogs and luncheon meats, contamination may occur after cooking but before packaging.


General recommendations to prevent listeriosis:

- Thoroughly cook raw food from animal sources such as beef, pork or poultry
- Wash raw vegetables thoroughly before eating
- Keep uncooked meats separate from cooked and ready-to-eat foods
- Avoid unpasteurized milk or foods made from unpasteurized milk
- Wash hands, knives and cutting boards after handling uncooked foods
- Eat perishable or ready-to-eat foods as soon as possible

Additional recommendations for persons at high risk, such as pregnant women and persons with weakened immune systems:

- Do not eat hot dogs, luncheon or deli meats, unless reheated until steaming hot.
- Avoid getting fluid from hot dog packages on other foods, utensils, and food preparation surfaces, and wash hands after handling hot dogs and luncheon or deli meats.
- Do not eat soft cheeses such as feta, Brie, and Camembert, blue veined cheeses, or Mexican-style cheeses such as queso blanco, queso fresco, and Panela, unless they have labels that clearly state they are made from pasteurized milk.
- Do not eat refrigerated pâtés or meat spreads. Canned or shelf-stable (product that does not have to be refrigerated until it has been opened) pâtés and meat spreads may be eaten.
- Do not eat refrigerated smoked seafood, unless it is contained in a cooked dish, such as a casserole. Examples of refrigerated smoked seafood, such as salmon, trout, whitefish, cod, tuna or mackerel, is most often labeled as "nova-style," "lox," "kippered," "smoked," or "jerky". The fish is found in the refrigerator section or sold at deli counters of grocery stores and delicatessens. Canned or shelf-stable smoked seafood may be eaten.