

# Chow Line

News from the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences

## Find out details when foods are recalled

**A friend told me that there has been an apple recall. She said only certain varieties were affected, but couldn't remember which ones. Where can I learn more about this kind of thing?**

There actually have been two recent recalls related to apples, both of which were linked to a bacterium called *Listeria monocytogenes*. It is a deadly pathogen and you're lucky to have a friend who will warn you about such recalls.

One recall began because of an ongoing outbreak of *L. monocytogenes*. The outbreak was traced to commercially produced caramel apples made from Gala and Granny Smith apples grown and processed by a company in California, Bidart Bros. Seven people have died in the outbreak, and 31 were hospitalized in 11 states around the country.

At first, just caramel apples were recalled, but when *L. monocytogenes* was found at the company's apple-packing facility, the firm recalled all of its Gala and Granny Smith apples. You should know that these are two of the most widely grown apple varieties, and apples from other growers and processors are not linked to this outbreak.

However, if you have caramel apples at home purchased before Dec. 24, 2014, or Gala or Granny Smith apples purchased before Jan. 6, and you're not sure if they are affected, check the advisory from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention at [cdc.gov/listeria/outbreaks/caramel-apples-12-14/advice-consumers.html](http://cdc.gov/listeria/outbreaks/caramel-apples-12-14/advice-consumers.html), or check with your grocery store. If you do have them, throw them away immediately. Place them in a closed plastic bag in a sealed trash to prevent other people or animals from eating them.

Although *L. monocytogenes* accounts for a relatively small fraction of foodborne illness, it's



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particularly lethal: An estimated 18 percent of those who contract listeriosis die. Most at risk are older adults; pregnant women; patients undergoing cancer treatment, transplants or receiving medications that suppress the immune system; people with AIDS or other immuno-compromising conditions, such as liver or kidney disease or insulin-dependent diabetes; and small children.

There was another recall on Dec. 10, 2014, for fresh-cut Gala apples grown in Pennsylvania and prepared and distributed by Del Monte Fresh. No illnesses have been reported related to this recall, but a random test by the Ohio Department of Agriculture found *L. monocytogenes* on the fresh-cut fruit. Grocery stores often used these apples in snack packs and other packaged, ready-to-eat fruit bowls. It's not likely anyone would still have these items on hand, but a complete list of products affected is online at [www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/ucm426419.htm](http://www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/ucm426419.htm).

The best place to look for recalls of fresh produce and other products regulated by the Food and Drug Administration is [www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls](http://www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls). This website has an easy-to-use search function to help you find details quickly.

Also, you can see recently recalled foods at [foodsafety.gov/recalls](http://foodsafety.gov/recalls), which includes items regulated by both the FDA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (primarily meat products).

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**Editor:** This column was reviewed by Sanja Ilic, food safety specialist for Ohio State University Extension, the outreach arm of Ohio State University's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences.

*Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences and its outreach and research arms, Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1043, or [filipic.3@osu.edu](mailto:filipic.3@osu.edu).*

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