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Multistate outbreak of Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* O121 infections linked to flour

LANSING, Mich. – The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is collaborating with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), and other state and local public health agencies to investigate a multistate outbreak of Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* O121 (STEC O121) infections linked to three brands of flour – Gold Medal flour, Wondra flour, and Signature Kitchens flour produced by General Mills.

Nationally, 38 people in 20 states have been infected with the outbreak strain of STEC O121; these illnesses occurred between late December 2015 and early May 2016. Four cases are adult residents of Michigan in Ingham, Kent, Oakland, and Ottawa counties; two of the four cases were hospitalized.

Preliminary results of the national epidemiologic investigation indicate an association between the outbreak strain and someone baking with Gold Medal flour or exposed to raw dough in restaurants. Traceback investigations show the flour was produced at the General Mills facility in Kansas City, Missouri.

The company announced a voluntary nationwide recall due to possible *E. coli* contamination of the three products on May 31. MDARD is conducting recall audit checks at grocery stores, convenience stores, and various other locations to ensure the product is removed from store shelves.

Symptoms of an *E. coli* infection include diarrhea (often bloody) and abdominal cramps. Recovery for most people occurs within one week. However, some illnesses last longer and can be more severe, resulting in a type of kidney failure called hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). HUS is more commonly seen in young children (less than 5 years), older adults, and people who are immune compromised. HUS symptoms can include fever, abdominal pain, pale skin tone, fatigue, bruising, bleeding from nose and mouth, and decreased urination. People who experience these symptoms should seek emergency medical care immediately.

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The list of recalled products and the manufacturing date range include the following:

Brand/Type	Size	Better if Used By Date	UPC
Gold Medal Wondra Flour	13.5 ounces	25FEB2017 - 30MAR2017	000-16000-18980
Gold Medal All Purpose Flour	2 pounds	25MAY2017KC - 03JUN2017KC	000-16000-10710
Gold Medal All Purpose Flour	5 pounds	25MAY2017KC 27MAY2017KC - 31MAY2017KC 01JUN2017KC 03JUN2017KC - 05JUN2017KC 11JUN2017KC - 14JUN2017KC	000-16000-10610
Gold Medal All Purpose Flour	10 pounds	02JUN2017KC 03JUN2017KC	000-16000-10410
Gold Medal Self-Rising Flour	2 pounds	23AUG2016KC	000-16000-11710
Gold Medal Unbleached Flour	5 pounds	25MAY2017KC 27MAY2017KC 03JUN2017KC 04JUN2017KC	000-16000-19610
Gold Medal All Purpose Flour Banded Pack	10 pounds	03JUN2017KC 04JUN2017KC 05JUN2017KC	000-16000-10410
Signature Kitchens All Purpose Flour Enriched Bleached	5 pounds	MAY 28 2017	000-21130-53001
Signature Kitchens Unbleached Flour All Purpose Enriched	5 pounds	BB MAY 27 2017	000-21130-53022

The CDC is recommending the following:

- Consumers, restaurants, and retailers should not use, serve, or sell the recalled flour products
- Do not eat or taste raw dough or batter, whether made from recalled flour or any other flour. Flour or other ingredients used to make raw dough or batter might be contaminated
- Restaurants and retailers should not serve raw dough to customers or allow children or other guests to play with raw dough

For updates on the ongoing investigation, visit www.cdc.gov/ecoli/2016/o121-06-16/index.html.

For more information including a list of the recalled flour products, visit www.generalmills.com/flour or www.cdc.gov/ecoli/2016/o121-06-16/advice-consumers.html.

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