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Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2017 2:37 PM

Subject: LDH EOC Health Alert Message (HAN) - Caldwell Foodborne Outbreak

Message Urgency: Emergency

Summary

The Louisiana Office of Public Health (OPH) is investigating an outbreak of gastrointestinal illness associated with food served as part of a local fundraiser in Caldwell Parish. While the investigation is still ongoing, a large number of cases have already been identified, including at least 30 patients that have required hospitalization for treatment of symptoms. OPH personnel collected clinical specimens from patients experiencing gastrointestinal symptoms for testing at the state public health laboratory. Preliminary results from the samples are positive for Salmonella. While confirmatory tests are still pending, the clinical presentation of patients and incubation periods reported are consistent with Salmonella infection.

Salmonella Background

Symptoms of acute gastroenteritis due to infection with Salmonella can include:

- Sudden onset of diarrhea (which may be bloody)
- Abdominal cramps
- Fever (almost always present)
- Nausea, vomiting, and headache may occur, though less frequent

The incubation period for nontyphoidal Salmonella gastroenteritis is usually 12-36 hours (range, 6-72 hours). Diarrhea may last for several days and lead to potentially severe dehydration, especially in infants and children under 2 years old and in adults over 65 years old. Even after clinical symptoms are no longer obvious, Salmonella bacteria may be found in the stool for several weeks. Most people with diarrhea due to a Salmonella infection recover completely. Sometimes, Salmonella infection can spread to urine, blood, bones, joints, the brain, or the nervous system, causing symptoms related to that body part or system. Some of these extra-intestinal infections can have long-term effects, depending on which part of the body is infected.

Salmonella gastrointestinal infections usually resolve in 5-7 days. Most do not require treatment other than oral fluids. People with severe diarrhea may require rehydration with intravenous fluids. Antibiotics are recommended only for patients who:

- Have a serious illness (such as severe diarrhea, high fever, bloodstream infection, or condition requiring hospitalization).
- Are considered at high risk for serious disease or complications (such as infants, adults over 65 years old, and people with weakened immune systems).

Some Salmonella bacteria are resistant to antibiotics. Sometimes the bacteria that cause infections are resistant to the drug of choice. Physicians must then recommend second- or third-choice drugs for treatment, but these drugs might be less effective, more toxic, or more expensive. Choices for antibiotic therapy for severe infections often include fluoroquinolones, third-generation cephalosporins, or ampicillin. Resistance to antimicrobial agents is not uncommon in Salmonella. Data from the National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System (<https://www.cdc.gov/narms/>) show that 5% of non-typhoidal Salmonella are resistant to five or more antimicrobial agents.

Recommendations

- Information regarding patients experiencing gastrointestinal symptoms should be reported to the Infectious Disease Epidemiology Section's 24/27 phone line: (800) 256-2748.
- Patients should be advised to discard any remaining food items that may be in their possession and clean the area where the food was stored with standard household cleaning products.
- Patients should be counseled regarding proper handwashing hygiene.

LDH EOC