

LISTERIA CONTAMINATED CHICKEN SANDWICHES PROVIDED TO MIDDLEMORE HOSPITAL

Spotless Services, food contractors to Counties Manukau District Health Board, informed the DHB today that 'Listeria Monocytogenes' had been found in packaged sandwiches that had been sold to staff, patients and public this week. The affected product was Thai Chicken sandwiches which were sold on Monday, 3rd March.

Auckland Regional Public Health Service are currently investigating the source of the contamination etc...

CMDHB Chief Medical Officer, Dr Don Mackie said it was disappointing that such an event could occur.

“We understand that the number of people potentially exposed is relatively small. Only 20 sandwiches were supplied and sold through the café. However, we do not know if subsequent batches of sandwiches could have been contaminated. To date we have had no notification of any staff, patients or visitors diagnosed with listeria infection.”

Listeria is a bacterium which is generally of concern to pregnant women, the very young, the elderly and people with a compromised immune system.

Symptoms can include a fever, headache, nausea, vomiting and aches and pains in joints and muscles and can lead to meningitis and blood poisoning.

“In pregnant women, mild flu-like illness may be experienced, however infections during pregnancy can lead to miscarriage or stillbirth,” said Dr Greg Simmons, Medical Officer of Health for the Auckland Regional Public Health Service.

“All pregnant women are advised not to eat chilled, pre-cooked meats.”

Dr Simmons said that while the risk of a person developing a listeria infection after consumption of a contaminated product was “small”, given the lowered immunity of patients, the length of time the meat product was available and, for some, the very long time it takes

for infection to develop (up to 70 days) it was important that the public be made aware of the possible health risk.

“Should anyone who ate a Thai Chicken Sandwich from Middlemore Hospital’s Aviary Café on March 3rd, become concerned about symptoms in the next few weeks, we suggest they contact their general practitioner highlighting the possibility of listeria,” Dr Simmons said.

NB: Information regarding the chicken sandwich supplier and subsequent product withdrawal issues, should be discussed with New Zealand Food Safety Authority. Information regarding the contracted provision of food services within the Counties Manukau DHB should be discussed with Spotless Services Limited.

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