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The New York State Department of Health has notified Niagara County Department of Health of a total of 491 positive laboratory confirmed cases of peanut-butter product-linked salmonellosis as of today, in 43 states, plus one in Canada. Nineteen of the U.S. cases have been identified in New York State. The Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) must confirm any laboratory samples to identify the same strains of *Salmonella* Typhimurium before any links to the peanut butter outbreak can be reported. Currently, no cases have been reported in Niagara County. However, the recall list continues to expand, and Niagara County residents should remain cautious about peanut butter-containing products.

Salmonella live in the intestinal tract and are shed in the stool of infected individuals, animals and birds. The infection can be spread to others when the germs are not washed off the hands after contact with stool or contaminated items, by handling infected animals or by consuming contaminated food. Foods can become contaminated before or during processing and by infected food handlers who did not wash their hands properly after using the bathroom. Infected household members can spread the infection to others in the home by not washing their hands.

Signs and symptoms of salmonella infection may appear within one to three days of exposure to the bacteria. Individuals infected with *Salmonella* may experience mild or severe diarrhea, abdominal cramps, fever and vomiting. Sometimes the infection enters the bloodstream and can be quite serious, particularly in infants and seniors.

Signs and symptoms of *Salmonella* infection usually resolve in five to seven days and often do not require treatment unless the patient becomes severely dehydrated or the infection spreads to the bloodstream. However, an infected person can carry the bacteria in the intestines for a few days or several months.

Recommendations:

- Do not eat products that have been recalled; discard them to prevent others from eating them.
- Postpone eating other peanut butter containing products until information becomes available about whether specific products may be affected.
- Wash hands with soap and running water and dry with disposable towels before and after food preparation, after using the bathroom, handling animals, changing diapers, and caring for infants and dependent individuals.
- If you have eaten peanut-containing products and are experiencing signs and symptoms of salmonellosis, please contact your doctor for a medical evaluation.

Additional consumer information and recommendations can be accessed on the following websites:

<http://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/typhimurium>
<http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/salmonellatyph.html#update>

PUBLIC HEALTH: PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.