

FOOD RECALLS

Frequently Asked Questions & Recall Terms

Q: How can I stay informed on food recalls?

A: www.recalls.gov is the best source for complete, accurate and up to date food recall information. Food recalls are often featured on local or national news broadcasts, and your grocery store should confirm that recalled food is removed from shelves. Your store may have people to answer questions, too.

Q: Who Issues Recalls?

A: In most cases the product manufacturer or producer initiates a recall in cooperation with the federal agency of jurisdiction. Almost all food recalls are voluntary actions, since, except for infant formula, federal regulatory agencies cannot mandate a recall.

Q: Who regulates food products?

A: The USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) inspects and regulates meat and poultry products, and pasteurized egg products that are produced in federally-inspected plants. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates all food products not regulated by the FSIS, including pasteurized egg products after the product leaves the processing plant.

Q: How are potentially unsafe food products discovered?

A: The manufacturer or distributor may identify the problem and voluntarily inform FSIS or FDA that

a potentially unsafe food product has been placed into commerce.

- FSIS, the FDA, or a state or local regulatory agency may discover potentially unsafe food products during sample testing or routine inspections.
- Other Federal agencies like the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) or Department of Defense (DoD) may report a potential health problem to FSIS or FDA.
- Most symptoms of foodborne illness do not occur until hours or even days after consuming contaminated food. So, it is difficult to determine if a specific food

product is unsafe.

- Consumers may notify their local public health departments or report directly to FSIS, FDA or another government agency.

Q: How do I report a suspected food safety problem?

A: Consumers can report adverse reactions related to food products by contacting:

- Local Public Health agencies
- FDA information line: 1-888-SAFEFOOD
- USDA meat and poultry hotline: 1-800-MPHOTLINE (888-674-6854)
- FDA emergency number: 1-301-443-1240

FOOD RECALL TERMS

Class I recall	Involves a dangerous or defective product that is reasonably likely to cause serious health problems or death. Example: raw ground beef found to be contaminated with <i>E. coli</i> O157:H7.
Class II recall	Involves a product that may cause temporary or medically reversible adverse health consequences.
Class III recall	Use of or exposure to the product is not likely to cause adverse health consequences.
Public Health Alert	May be issued when FSIS has reason to believe that a meat or poultry product may be associated with human illnesses, but cannot identify a specific product that should be recalled.
Market withdrawal	Involves a product that is withdrawn from the market because it does not meet company quality specifications or it exhibits a minor infraction of regulatory requirements.
Establishment Number	The establishment number directly connects a meat or poultry food product to the plant at which it was produced.

Download this flyer at www.recallbasics.org