

# Safe at the Plate

Food safety resources  
for the public



# August 2026

Safe and healthy food  
wherever you eat

## Understanding Food Recalls

### What is a Food Recall?

Food recalls remove foods from distribution and sale that violate food safety regulations. Foods may be recalled by different agencies depending on the type of food. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates all foods except meat, poultry, and processed egg products, which are regulated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Recalled foods may cause injury or illness, especially for people who are pregnant or have weakened immune systems because of chronic illness or medical treatment. A food may be recalled because of:

- ◆ Contamination with disease-causing microorganisms, such as bacteria, viruses, or parasites.
- ◆ The presence of foreign objects such as broken glass or fragments of metal or plastic.
- ◆ Failure to list a major allergen in the food, such as peanuts or shellfish, on the product label.

Food recalls are usually voluntarily initiated by the manufacturer or distributor of the food. In some situations, the FDA or USDA may request or mandate a recall.

Grocery stores may notify their customers who purchased the food product if they can identify who they are through purchase records such as those associated with frequent shopper cards.

### Where Can Consumers Find Recall Information?

- ◆ Recalls of FDA regulated products can be found in FDA's **Enforcement Report**. (<https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/ires/index.cfm>)
- ◆ FDA also offers a recall subscription service. Users can choose to be notified of all recalls, commodity specific recalls (i.e., food) and/or individual recall events on a daily or weekly basis. (<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USFDA/subscriber/new>)



Photo credit: KEYC News Now

- ◆ Public warnings are an effective way for companies to notify the public of a recall. These warnings are posted on **Recalls, Market Withdrawals, and Safety Alerts**.  
(<https://www.fda.gov/safety/recalls-market-withdrawals-safety-alerts>)  
Not all recalls are posted on this page.
- ◆ Recalls of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulated products can be found at <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/recalls>.
- ◆ The company that initiated the product removal issues a recall notice to their direct customers. These notices contain information to help customers identify recalled foods, including the product name, size and type of packaging, Universal Product Code (UPC), product codes, such as lot codes, sell-by, or use-by dates, pictures of the packaging and labels, and distribution information (i.e., the states and/or stores in which they were sold).

## What Should You Do If You Have a Recalled Food?

Read the recall notice carefully and follow any product-specific instructions.

- ◆ Often, recalled products may be returned to the store where they were purchased for a full refund. If not, dispose of the product properly— if it's contaminated, wrap it securely before putting it in the trash.
- ◆ Do not give the product to others, such as a food bank or a pet

Consumers should follow these steps for cleaning surfaces that may have been in contact with contaminated food:

- ◆ Wash the inside walls and shelves of the refrigerator, cutting boards and countertops, and utensils that may have contacted contaminated foods; then sanitize them with a solution of one tablespoon of chlorine bleach to one gallon of hot water; dry with a clean cloth or paper towel that has not been previously used.
- ◆ Wash and sanitize surfaces used to serve or store potentially contaminated products.
- ◆ Wash hands with warm water and soap following the cleaning and sanitation process.

## What Should You Do If a Food Product Made You Sick?

- ◆ Consumers who are ill should contact their health care provider to report their symptoms and receive care.
- ◆ Also, if you believe a food product has made you sick, you should contact your local health department at the phone number or web address below.



### Harrison-Clarksburg Health Department

**330 W. Main St.**

**Clarksburg, WV 26301**

**304-623-9308**

*The above information is courtesy of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.*