

CFIA AND INDUSTRY TESTING FOR *LISTERIA MONOCYTOGENES* IN READY-TO-EAT MEAT AND POULTRY

April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016



All **federally registered establishments in Canada** producing **ready-to-eat (RTE) meat or poultry products** that are exposed to the environment after processing must implement the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA) **Risk-Based Verification Sampling of RTE Meat and Poultry Products** sampling plan. Similarly, the CFIA conducts a National Microbiological Monitoring Program which samples and tests RTE meat and poultry products.

The CFIA and industry continuously work together on ongoing testing for *Listeria monocytogenes* to safeguard the food supply.

HIGHLIGHTS :

- 1 Both the CFIA and industry testing results during the period of **April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016** were found to be comparable and the **prevalence rate could be considered low** when considering the prevalence of *Listeria monocytogenes* in the RTE products sampled.
- 2 Appropriate follow-up actions took place for each food product that was found positive for *Listeria monocytogenes*.
- 3 The CFIA continues to analyse the data submitted by industry under the Risk-Based Verification Sampling of Ready-to-Eat Meat and Poultry Products sampling plan. The purpose is to verify that the testing is being conducted as per the procedures outlined in the Meat Manual of Procedures.

What is *Listeria monocytogenes*?

- A bacterium which is widely distributed in the environment;
- A bacterium that can cause illness in humans;
- A bacterium that persists in cold, moist environments and could grow on foods being stored in the refrigerator.

Why test for *Listeria monocytogenes* in RTE products?

Given the potential growth of the bacterium at refrigeration temperatures and the absence of further cooking steps, more testing for the potential presence of *Listeria monocytogenes* is warranted to safeguard the food supply.

What is a RTE product?

A RTE product needs no further cooking before eating. Foods that must only be washed, thawed, or warmed are considered RTE.



CFIA and Industry Sampling and Testing for *Listeria monocytogenes* in RTE Meat and Poultry Products

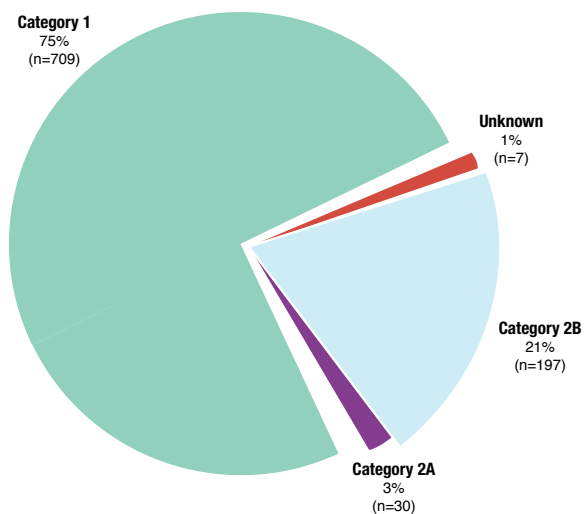
From April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016

Sampling Program	Number of Establishments	Total Number of Samples Tested (n)	Total Number of <i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> Positive Samples	<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> Prevalence
CFIA Sampling	201	943	3	0.32%
Industry Sampling	183	1,543	5	0.32%

Other published studies mention a prevalence of 0 to 4.7%¹ and 0 to 5.0%². The prevalence found via the CFIA and industry testing is comparable and could even be considered low. **Lower prevalence indicates safer food for the Canadian public.**

Risk Category Distribution of RTE Meat and Poultry Products Tested for *Listeria monocytogenes* by CFIA

From April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016



Follow-Up Actions to *Listeria monocytogenes* Positive Samples

Appropriate follow-up actions took place for each food product that was found positive for *Listeria monocytogenes*. These may have included:

- Additional facility inspections;
- Issuance of a Corrective Action Request to the establishment;
- Additional product/surface sampling/testing to verify Good Manufacturing Practices;
- Removal of affected products from the marketplace.

Category 1: Food that **could** support the growth of *Listeria monocytogenes*.

Examples: deli-meats, hot dogs, pâté, etc.

Category 2A: Foods in which the growth of *Listeria monocytogenes* is **limited** (usually products with a short shelf life of less than 5 days).

Examples: some bolognese meat sauce with a shelf life of 5 days or less, some cooked meat balls with a shelf life of 5 days or less, etc.

Category 2B: Foods that usually **do not** support the growth of *Listeria monocytogenes*.

Examples: dry salami, some prosciutto hams, etc.

Contact:

Aline Dimitri | Executive Director | Food Safety Science Directorate | Canadian Food Inspection Agency |
CFIA.LCDDCL.ACIA@inspection.gc.ca

¹ Gombas, D. E., Chen, Y., Clavero, R. S. et Scott, V. N. (2003). Survey of *Listeria monocytogenes* in ready-to-eat foods. J. Food Prot., 66: 559-569.

² Bohaychuk, V. M., Gensler, G. E., King, R. K., Manninen, K. I., Sorensen, O., Wu, J. T., ... et McMullen, L. M. (2006). Occurrence of pathogens in raw and ready-to-eat meat and poultry products collected from the retail marketplace in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. J. Food Prot., 69(9):2176-2182.