

# Food and Drugs Authority

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FDA/CPE/PRL/18/0002

14<sup>th</sup> March 2018

The News Editor

## **PUBLIC NOTICE - OUTBREAK OF LISTERIOSIS IN SOUTH AFRICA LINKED TO READY-TO-EAT MEAT PRODUCTS**

Following news on the outbreak of Listeriosis in South Africa, the Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) has intensified market surveillance and monitoring at the ports of entry for meat products from South Africa. The FDA has been in constant communication with the International Network of Food Safety Authorities (INFOSAN) which shares food safety alerts.

Update from INFOSAN indicated that investigations conducted by the South African Authorities on the outbreak revealed that ready-to-eat (RTE) processed meat products produced by Enterprise Foods in Polokwane, South Africa (a subsidiary of the Tiger Brands Company) are responsible for the outbreak. The affected RTE products are now subject to recall.

Therefore, as Ghana is a known export country for Enterprise Foods the INFOSAN has warned that there is a possibility of some of the recalled products having been exported to Ghana.

The FDA has intensified its post market surveillance activities nationwide and any ready-to-eat (RTE) processed meat products produced by Enterprise Foods in Polokwane, South Africa found will be detained and destroyed. In addition vigilance at the various ports of entry has also been intensified, as no imports should be made from this company. Any products from Enterprise Foods in Polokwane, South Africa (a subsidiary of the Tiger Brands Company) will be detained and the necessary regulatory actions taken.

*Listeria monocytogenes* is typically a food-borne organism which causes the illness called listeriosis and can grow and reproduce inside the host cell. *Listeria* is a bacterium that is naturally found in the environment and is capable of surviving with or without oxygen. It therefore has the ability to survive and grow at temperatures as low as 0°C thereby allowing multiplication at refrigeration temperatures.

It commonly occurs in soil, water, vegetation and in the faeces of some animals. *Listeria monocytogenes* has been associated with foods such as raw milk, pasteurized fluid milk, cheeses (particularly soft-ripened varieties), ice cream, raw vegetables, fermented raw-meat sausages, raw and cooked poultry, raw meats (of all types), and raw and

smoked fish. This fact, coupled with variable incubation period can range from 6 hours to 70 days.

The prevention of listeriosis is similar to guidance used to help prevent other foodborne illnesses. This includes practicing safe food handling and following the WHO Five Keys to Safer Food (1. Keep clean. 2. Separate raw and cooked Food. 3. Cook and reheat thoroughly. 4 Keep food at safe temperatures. 5. Use safe water and raw materials.)

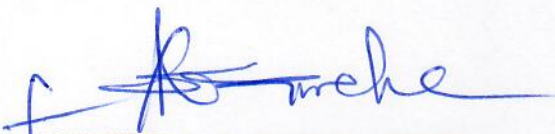
Additionally, persons in high risk groups should:

- Avoid consuming ready to eat meat products such as sausages, hams, patés and meat spreads.
- Read and carefully follow the shelf life period and storage temperatures indicated on the product label to ensure that products are not from Enterprise Foods, Polokwane, South Africa (a subsidiary of the Tiger Brands Company)

It is important to respect the shelf-life and storage temperature written on labels of ready-to-eat foods to ensure that bacteria potentially present in these foods does not multiply to dangerously high numbers. Cooking before eating is another very effective way to kill the bacteria.

The FDA is assuring the public of its continuous resolve to protect public health and safety. Consequently the FDA is appealing to the general public **not to patronise any product from Enterprise Foods, Polokwane, South Africa (a subsidiary of the Tiger Brands Company)** should they find the product on the market and to give information to the FDA on the following numbers and social media platforms;

- 0800151000 (Toll free on Vodafone and Airtel only)
- 0299802932 or 0299802933 (Hotline)
- 4015 (SMS short code)
- 0206973065 ( Call and WhatsApp)
- Facebook (Food and Drugs Authority-GH)
- Twitter (@ GH\_FDA)



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