



Philadelphia Department of Public Health
Division of Disease Control

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Health Alert

Salmonella Outbreak Associated with Church Function in Philadelphia September 24, 2007

The Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH) Division of Disease Control (DDC) is investigating of a large cluster of gastroenteritis among people who attended a church supper that occurred on Saturday September 15, 2007. The church is on North 5th Street near Lehigh Avenue; the event was held at a hall on Allegheny and Mascher Avenues. Preliminary culture results have identified *Salmonella* Group D as the etiologic agent; serotype identification is pending. Illness presentations have primarily included acute abdominal pain, fever, non-bloody diarrhea, and headache. The clinical illness associated with this outbreak appears to be extremely severe. The duration of illness has been from 2 to 6 days and longer among some of the cases; several people have presented for medical care and have been hospitalized.

Generally, non-typhoidal salmonellosis is a self-limiting illness, with treatment advised for cases with bacteremia, extraintestinal disease, underlying immunosuppression, or children less than 3 months of age. Clinicians may also consider therapy for severe or protracted illness; rehydration and electrolyte repletion may be required. The strain of *Salmonella* isolated in this outbreak is resistant to ampicillin, but is susceptible to fluoroquinolones and trimethoprim/sulfamethoxazole (TMP-SMX). Secondary transmission among close contacts can occur and has been associated with this outbreak.

Recommendations regarding attendees of this supper

- Obtain a rectal swab or fresh stool for culture on patients who present with a clinical presentation suggestive of Salmonellosis.
- Evaluate symptomatic patients for extraintestinal disease, and treat as appropriate. Consider therapy for patients with particularly severe or prolonged symptoms. Avoid the use of ampicillin given the resistance pattern of this strain.
- Control secondary transmission by advising symptomatic patients not to prepare food, and to practice thorough hand washing after using the restroom or changing diapers.
- Please report all suspected cases to the Division of Disease Control.

To report a case associated with this outbreak, or to obtain additional information, please call the Division of Disease Control at 215-685-6741 during regular business hours, or 215-686-1776 after-hours and ask for the person on-call for the Division.