



AVA recalls all rockmelons from Australia as a precautionary measure

8 March 2018: The Australian authorities provided new information on the recall of rockmelons from a specific grower in Australia on 7 March, which indicated that more implicated consignments had been exported to Singapore. The whole rockmelons (cantaloupe) from this grower have been linked to an outbreak of human listeriosis in Australia. As a precautionary measure, the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority (AVA) is working with importers and retailers to recall all rockmelons from Australia, pending further clarification on their respective sources.

2 AVA had [earlier recalled two consignments of rockmelons from the implicated source](#). We expanded the recall to include all rockmelons from Australia immediately after receiving the latest updates from the Australian authorities. The Australian authorities confirmed that the farm had stopped production on 23 Feb and that there are no other affected farms in Australia. AVA will continue to work with the Australian authorities on this matter. We had earlier taken samples of locally sold rockmelons for food safety tests, including testing for listeria. The results are pending.

3 To date, there have been no reported cases of listeriosis linked to the consumption of rockmelons in Singapore. Food retail establishments are advised to temporarily stop the sale of rockmelons or use of rockmelons in dishes prepared for public consumption with immediate effect until further notice. This applies to rockmelons from Australia; if retailers are unsure of the source of their rockmelons, they should also stop the sale or use of such rockmelons as a precaution. Consumers who have purchased rockmelons from Australia, or are unsure of the source of the rockmelons purchased, are advised not to consume them. Consumers who do not feel well after consumption of rockmelon should seek medical attention.

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Health Advisory

4 Listeriosis is a bacterial infection caused by *Listeria monocytogenes*. The bacteria is found in the environment, such as soil, water, effluents and the faeces of humans and animals. Food items which could be contaminated by the bacteria include raw or ready-to-eat foods, such as raw (unpasteurised) milk or raw meat and their products, seafood, and fresh produce including fruits and vegetables.

5 The key to prevention of listeriosis lies in hand hygiene, safe handling, cooking and consumption of food. People can reduce risk for listeriosis by:

- Thoroughly washing raw vegetables and fruits before eating. Peel them if necessary.
- Thoroughly cooking raw food from animal sources (i.e. beef, pork, poultry, etc.)
- Keeping uncooked meats separate from vegetables, fruits, cooked and ready-to-eat food.
- Avoiding raw (unpasteurized) milk or foods made from raw milk
- Washing hands and kitchen utensils such as knives and cutting boards after handling raw food
- Using separate sets of knives and cutting board for raw and cooked food

6 The incubation period of *Listeria* ranges from 3 to 70 days (typically 1 – 4 weeks). A person with mild listeriosis usually has fever and muscle aches, preceded by diarrhoea or other gastrointestinal symptoms. Pregnant women, the elderly or individuals with a weakened immune system, i.e. people in immuno-compromised status due to AIDS, leukaemia, cancer, solid-organ transplant and steroid therapy, are at highest risk of serious disease which could include brain and heart infections or complications in the foetus/newborn.

7 Listeriosis is treatable with antibiotics if diagnosed early. Consumers should seek medical attention as early as possible if they develop fever and muscle aches, preceded by diarrhoea or other gastrointestinal symptoms that appear within 70 days after consuming Australian rock melon.

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