

Idaho Stores Sold Berries Linked to National Hepatitis Outbreak

No Idaho illness reported; people who purchased berries are being notified.

An outbreak of viral illness hepatitis A may be linked to “Townsend Farms organic Anti-Oxidant Blend” frozen berries sold by Costco stores. There have been no reports of illness associated with the berries sold in Idaho, although they were sold throughout the state.

Costco is notifying its members who purchased Townsend Farms Organic Anti-Oxidant Blend berries since late February 2013. The store has removed the berries from its shelves at this time. People who have any of this berry mix in their freezers should discard all remaining product.

People who have eaten these berries and develop yellow eyes or skin, abdominal pain, vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, pale stools or dark urine should contact their healthcare provider immediately. Symptoms usually develop between 2 and 7 weeks after ingesting a contaminated food or beverage. It is very important if you have these symptoms that you do not go to work, especially if you work in food service, health care or child care.

People who consumed the berries within the last two weeks can prevent illness by receiving a vaccination if they have not been vaccinated for hepatitis A before. People can contact their health care provider or their local public health district for vaccination information. If a person received the Hepatitis A vaccine in the past, they are unlikely to become ill with the disease.

Hepatitis A is an acute liver disease often caused by improper handwashing by a food handler. Illnesses are most often associated with diarrhea, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain, which can be more severe in people with chronic medical conditions that affect their immune system.

Approximately 34 people from Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, Arizona and California have been reported with hepatitis A infections that may be associated with consuming the berry mix. Costco stores in Washington state also sold the frozen berries being investigated, however, like Idaho there have been no reports of associated illnesses to date.

For more information, please see the [CDC website](#) or call [your local public health district](#).