



**For Immediate Release**

February 24, 2021

## **DPH Updates Recall of Contaminated Cheese**

**HARTFORD** -- The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) has expanded its warning to consumers, restaurants, and retailers not to eat, serve or sell any soft cheeses produced by El Abuelito Cheese Company of Paterson, NJ due to laboratory findings that confirm the product is the source of a multistate outbreak of foodborne bacteria called listeria monocytogenes.

This update expands the previous recall on February 19, 2021 that included a recall of only Queso Fresco style cheese to now include all fresh cheese products with expiration dates through March 28, 2021 (03/28/21). The products are marketed under the El Abuelito Cheese brand, distributed in CT, NJ, PA, NY; the Rio Grande Food Products brand, distributed in VA, NC, MD; and Río Lindo distributed in NC and MD. The products were distributed until February 16, 2021 and were available in supermarkets, wholesale and retail stores.

Listeria monocytogenes is an organism which can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, pregnant women and others with weakened immune systems. Although healthy individuals may suffer only short-term symptoms such as high fever, severe headache, stiffness, nausea, abdominal pain and diarrhea, listeria infection can cause miscarriages, stillbirths and fetal infection among pregnant women. Because these products may still be in consumer's refrigerators, DPH encourages consumers to check any fresh cheese they may have to determine if it included in this recall. Customers and food establishments who still have the product should not consume or serve it and should discard it immediately or return it to the place of purchase for a refund.

FDA update: [https://www.fda.gov/food/outbreaks-foodborne-illness/outbreak-investigation-listeria-monocytogenes-hispanic-style-fresh-and-soft-cheeses-february-2021?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.fda.gov/food/outbreaks-foodborne-illness/outbreak-investigation-listeria-monocytogenes-hispanic-style-fresh-and-soft-cheeses-february-2021?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

Spanish version of FDA's update: <https://www.fda.gov/food/outbreaks-foodborne-illness/investigacion-del-brote-de-listeria-monocytogenes-quesos-frescos-y-blandos-al-estilo-hispano-febrero>

CDC update: <https://www.cdc.gov/listeria/outbreaks/hispanic-soft-cheese-02-21/index.html>

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