

Food Recalls: What You Need to Know



What is a Recall?

Food recalls are removals of foods from the market that are in violation of the US Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) regulations. FDA regulates all foods except meat, poultry, and processed egg products, which are regulated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). It is important that consumers be aware of recalls because recalled foods may cause injury or illness, especially for people who are pregnant or have weakened immune systems because of chronic illness or medical treatment. A food may be recalled because of contamination with disease causing microorganisms, such as bacteria, viruses, or parasites; the presence of foreign objects such as broken glass or fragments of metal or plastic; or failure to list a major allergen in the food, such as peanuts or shellfish, on the product label. Food recalls are usually voluntarily initiated by the manufacturer or distributor of the food. In some situations, the FDA may request or mandate a recall. There are instances where the violation can be corrected and the food returned to the marketplace.

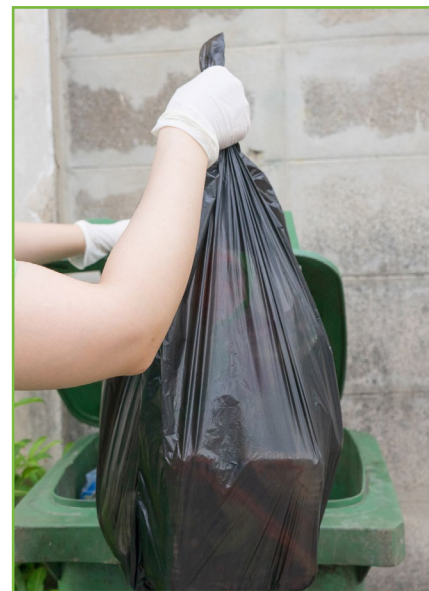
Where Can Consumers Find Information About Recalls?

- **Enforcement Report:** Recalls of FDA regulated products can be found in [FDA's Enforcement Report](#)
- **Subscribe:** FDA offers a [recall subscription service](#). Users can choose to be notified of all recalls, commodity specific recalls (i.e., Food) and/or individual recall events on a daily or weekly basis.
- **Public warnings** are an effective way for companies to notify the public of a recall. These warnings are posted [here](#). Not all recalls are posted on this page.
- **Other Government Agencies:** Recalls of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulated products can be found [here](#).
- **Recalling firm:** The company that initiated the product removal issues a recall notice to their direct customers. These notices contain information to help customers identify recalled foods, including the product name, size and type of packaging, Universal Product Code (UPC), product codes, such as lot codes, sell-by, or use-by dates, pictures of the packaging and labels, and distribution information (i.e., the states and/or stores in which they were sold).

What Should Consumers Do If They Believe They Have a Recalled Food in Their Possession?

Follow instructions: Read the recall notice carefully and follow any product-specific instructions

- Often, recalled products may be returned to the store where they were purchased for a full refund. If not, dispose of the product properly— if it's contaminated, wrap it securely before putting it in the trash
- Do not give the product to others, such as a food bank or a pet
- Consumers should follow these steps for cleaning surfaces that may have been in contact with contaminated food:
 - Wash the inside walls and shelves of the refrigerator, cutting boards and countertops, and utensils that may have contacted contaminated foods; then sanitize them with a solution of one tablespoon of chlorine bleach to one gallon of hot water; dry with a clean cloth or paper towel that has not been previously used.
 - Wash and sanitize surfaces used to serve or store potentially contaminated products.
 - Wash hands with warm water and soap following the cleaning and sanitation process.



What Should Consumers Do If They Think That a FDA Regulated Product Has Made Them Sick?

Consumers who have any symptoms of a foodborne illness or an allergic reaction should contact their health care provider. Consumers can report issues to [FDA](#) or the company that distributed the product.