



## MONTHLY MORBIDITY REPORT

JUL 11 1975

## Provisional Statistics

FROM THE

OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH STATISTICS

Reported Morbidity  
April, 1975

## STAPHYLOCOCCAL FOOD POISONING - TERREBONNE PARISH

HORACE J. THIBODAUX, R.S.  
Chief Sanitarian  
Terrebonne Parish Health Unit  
ELDA W. HURLEY, R.N.  
Nursing Supervisor  
Terrebonne Parish Health Unit  
W. CHARLES MILLER, M.P.H.  
RICHARD GREENBERG, M.D.  
Epidemiology Unit

On Saturday, March 29, 1975, approximately 2,000 people attended a religious convention in Houma, Louisiana. Many ate from a buffet prepared for the delegates. Within 8½ hours after the meal, over 200 reported nausea, vomiting, or abdominal cramps and 3 were hospitalized.

The lunch included shrimp salad sandwiches, ham roll, luncheon meat, chili, hamburgers, potato chips, mayonnaise, mustard, ketchup, ice cream, coke, and milk. Questionnaires distributed to 101 ill persons and to 125 well persons revealed a close association between illness and eating shrimp salad sandwiches. Laboratory examination gave confirmation by isolating from the shrimp salad 1.3 billion colonies of coagulase positive staphylococci per gram of specimen.

Investigation of food preparation uncovered the all too common culprit causing this type of outbreak, inadequate refrigeration. Evidently the shrimp had been thawed twice before boiling, each thaw lasting for a period of hours at room temperature. After boiling, the shrimp were allowed to stand overnight at room temperature. The following day they were made into sandwiches and served.

Foods are often contaminated from the hands of workers preparing them; the responsible individual may have an obvious open sore on his hand. In the United States foods commonly responsible as vehicles are usually perishable items which have been left at room temperature, especially meat sand-

wiches, milk, and cream filled bakery products.

Not all strains of coagulase positive staphylococci produce the toxin for food poisoning, but the toxin when present is relatively heat-stable and can remain active even after food has been exposed to boiling temperatures. The bacteria can produce enough toxin in only four to five hours incubation at 80° - 90° F to cause disease. Refrigeration prevents toxin formation.<sup>1</sup>

Because of its rapid onset, short duration, absence of high fever, and usual association of similar illness in others who have eaten the same food, diagnosis is not difficult. Nevertheless other rapid onset food-borne illnesses should be considered such as those due to heavy metals. In most cases no treatment is needed; however, a few may require fluid replacement or treatment from complications (as illustrated in this outbreak).

Recommendations to food handlers should include proper cleaning of work areas, hand washing, and refrigeration of perishable foods, with reheating only immediately before serving. Specifically those food handlers with infected hand lesions should be forbidden to work, and all food handlers should be trained to observe strict personal hygiene.

## REFERENCE

1. Cecil-Loeb's Textbook of Medicine, Paul B. Beeson and Walsh McDermott editors, W.B. Saunders Company, 1971, pp 70-72



SELECTED REPORTABLE DISEASES  
(By Place of Residence)

FROM THE  
OFFICE OF  
PUBLIC HEALTH STATISTICS

STATE AND PARISH TOTALS	ASEPTIC MENINGITIS	DIPHTHERIA	ENCEPHALITIS	ENCEPHALITIS, POST INFECTION	HEPATITIS A AND UNSPECIFIED	HEPATITIS B	TUBERCULOSIS, PULMONARY	MENINGOCOCCAL INFECTIONS	PERTUSSIS	RABIES IN ANIMALS	RUBELLA*	SEVERE UNDERNUTRITION	SHIGELLOSIS	TYPHOID FEVER	OTHER SALMONELLOSIS	TETANUS	MEASLES	GONORRHEA	SYPHILIS, PRIMARY AND SECONDARY
Reported Morbidity April, 1975																			
TOTAL TO DATE 1974	23	0	6	0	211	79	166	20	5	7	37	13	39	2	39	0	6	8537	229
TOTAL TO DATE 1975	28	0	8	6	176	64	179	18	12	2	174	8	47	0	48	3	0	7291	180
TOTAL THIS MONTH	17	0	3	3	66	25	63	3	7	0	77	2	12	0	13	2	0	2241	51
ACADIA	3				3		1								1			10	4
ALLEN																		8	9
ASCENSION							1											10	2
ASSUMPTION					1													3	3
AVOUELLES																		18	18
BEAUREGARD																		157	3
BIENVILLE						1												81	1
BOSSIER					4		1											1	4
CADDO					2		1				3		1		2			4	5
CALCASIEU							1				6		1		5			6	1
CALDWELL																		1	1
CAMERON																		4	4
CATAHOULA			1								6							10	5
CLAIBORNE							3											5	4
CONCORDIA									2									4	4
DESOTO							1											4	5
EAST BATON ROUGE					8	2	3						1		2			138	5
EAST CARROLL																		16	1
EAST FELICIANA							1								1			6	4
EVANGELINE																		4	4
FRANKLIN																		13	4
GRANT																		4	4
IBERIA																		15	8
IBERVILLE																		8	2
JACKSON							1											4	4
JEFFERSON	5				10	4	2				7							147	5
JEFFERSON DAVIS					2													4	4
LAFAYETTE	2						6											46	31
LAFOURCHE					1	1	1	1	1									31	
LASALLE																			
LINCOLN						1	1				2							29	5
LIVINGSTON																		5	11
MADISON																		13	3
MOREHOUSE																		11	8
NATCHITOCHES																		8	24
ORLEANS	3		1		20	9	34	1	1		21		8	2	1		789	93	
OUACHITA													1					4	1
PLAQUEMINES					1													4	1
POINTE COUPEE																		4	1
RAPIDES	1				1		1		2									82	1
RED RIVER																		1	1
RICHLAND																		12	6
SABINE																		6	4
ST. BERNARD			1		1	3	1				16	1						4	1
ST. CHARLES																		10	1
ST. HELENA																		5	14
ST. JAMES	2			1														14	15
ST. JOHN																		15	27
ST. LANDRY					3		2											12	8
ST. MARTIN															1			59	1
ST. MARY						1												56	1
ST. TAMMANY	1				3							1						1	14
TANGIPAHOA																		1	7
TENSAS																		14	4
TERREBONNE					3	2			1									77	3
UNION											2							7	4
VERMILION																		4	27
VERNON						1					14							12	8
WASHINGTON					1													21	3
WEBSTER							1											27	13
WEST BATON ROUGE																		2	2
WEST CARROLL					2	1												43	5
WEST FELICIANA					1													5	2
WINN																		5	2
OUT OF STATE																		2	

\* Includes Rubella, Congenital Syndrome