DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
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Center for Medicaid and State Operations/Survey and Certification Group

Ref: S&C-09-29

DATE: **March 27, 2009**

TO: State Survey Agency Directors

FROM: Director
Survey and Certification Group

SUBJECT: Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Warning to Nursing Homes Regarding Recalled Food Products Containing Peanuts

Memorandum Summary

- The FDA and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have received reports of deaths of elderly nursing home residents who had underlying health conditions and had consumed recalled food products containing peanuts contaminated by *Salmonella*.
- The FDA is issuing a warning to nursing home and other long-term care facility administrators, owners, and food managers to ensure they are aware of the dangers of their residents eating recalled food products, and urging them to check their institutional supply of peanut butter and other products containing peanut ingredients for food items that may be affected by the recent voluntary recalls.
- FDA offers a searchable database of recalled products and urges personnel at nursing homes and other long-term care facilities to continue to check it often, as more recalls are added, by visiting http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/peanutbutterrecall/index.cfm.

Although hundreds of recall notices have been posted for thousands of peanut products, the FDA and CDC have received reports of the deaths of elderly nursing home residents who had underlying health conditions, and had consumed recalled food products containing peanuts that were contaminated by *Salmonella*.

The FDA has requested the help of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to warn nursing home and other long-term care facility administrators, owners, and food managers regarding the potential danger of their residents eating recalled food products, and urging them to check their institutional supply of peanut butter and other products containing peanut ingredients for food items that may be affected by the recent voluntary recalls.

The FDA also urges personnel at nursing homes and other long-term care facilities to check their searchable database of recalled products often, as more recalls are added, by visiting http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/peanutbutterrecall/index.cfm.

CMS is issuing the attached FDA notice regarding the dangers of recalled peanut products to nursing home and long-term care administrators.

/s/
Thomas E. Hamilton

cc: Survey and Certification Regional Office Management

Attachment

Dear Nursing Home or Long-Term Care Facility Owner, Administrator, or Food Service Manager:

Although hundreds of recall notices have been posted for thousands of peanut products since mid January, due to possible *Salmonella* contamination, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that a small number of cases of salmonellosis continues to occur. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the CDC both have received reports of deaths, in nursing homes, of elderly patients who had underlying health conditions and who consumed products that have been recalled.

The FDA has advised consumers not to eat products that have been recalled and to throw them away in a manner that prevents others from eating them. However, some people interviewed recently by CDC may, apparently, still be eating recalled products and are becoming ill. As a precaution, FDA is urging operators of nursing homes and long-term care facilities to check their institutional supply of peanut butter and other products containing peanut ingredients for food items that may be affected by the recent voluntary recalls.

Foods that might have been recalled, depending on the source of the peanut ingredients, include peanuts (e.g., dry and oil roasted), peanut products (e.g., peanut paste, peanut butter, peanut granules, and peanut splits) as well as any foods that contain these peanuts and/or peanut products as an ingredient. Examples of products that might contain such peanut ingredients are cookies, crackers, cereal, candy, and ice cream, among others. (Major national brands of jarred peanut butter found in grocery stores have *not* been among the products recalled.)

FDA offers a searchable database of recalled products and urges personnel at nursing homes and other long-term care facilities to continue to check it often, as more recalls are added, by visiting http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/peanutbutterrecall/index.cfm.

Please note, however, that some companies might not yet have notified FDA that they are recalling a product, and the product might not yet appear in the database. Before buying or serving peanut-containing products that do not appear on the FDA database, please check the company's website or call your supplier to ensure that the product has not been recalled.

Also note that the potentially contaminated products probably will not have the name "Peanut Corporation of America" or "PCA" on the label. This is because other companies used PCA peanut ingredients in their products and put their own brand names, not PCA's name, on their labels.

Recalls are ongoing, as more potentially contaminated products are identified. The FDA database is updated frequently. Visitors to the database can sort their searches by product category; brand name; UPC code, if known; product description; or any combination of brand, UPC code, and description.

Those who do not have internet access can get this information by calling FDA's Information line at 1-888-SAFEFOOD during regular business hours or by calling CDC's information line at 1-800-CDC-INFO, which is staffed 24 hours a day.