

Summary and Action Items

- 1.) FDA is investigating consumer complaints of *Cronobacter sakazakii* and *Salmonella* Newport infections. All the cases are reported to have consumed powdered infant formula produced from Abbott Nutrition's Sturgis, Michigan facility.
- 2.) Health care providers in Illinois should report to their local health department any laboratory confirmed *Cronobacter sakazakii* cases in infants that consumed powdered infant formula in the 10 days before illness onset between November 2020 and present.
- 3.) Health care providers are encouraged to obtain cultures in such cases and promptly report cases to their local health department (list below).
- 4.) Local health departments should investigate cases, complete the *Cronobacter* Outbreak Investigation form, and forward to IDPH.

Background

The FDA, along with CDC and state and local partners are investigating four consumer complaints of infant illness related to products from Abbott Nutrition's Sturgis, Michigan facility received from 9/6/2021 to 12/18/2021. All the cases are reported to have consumed powdered infant formula produced from Abbott Nutrition's Sturgis, Michigan facility. These complaints include three reports of *Cronobacter sakazakii* infections and one report of *Salmonella* Newport infection in infants. All four cases related to these complaints were hospitalized and *Cronobacter* may have contributed to a death in one case.

Potential Exposures

Three brands of powdered infant formula were recalled by FDA on February 17, 2022, for possible *Cronobacter* contamination. Recalled powdered infant formula includes the brand names Similac, Alimentum, and EleCare. The first two digits of the product code are 22 through 37, and the code on the container contains "K8," "SH," or "Z2" and the expiration date April 1, 2022, or later. **Recalled product should not be fed to babies.**

Symptoms

Cronobacter illness is very rare. Sickness from *Cronobacter* in babies will usually start with a fever and poor feeding, crying, or very low energy. Some babies may also have seizures. Babies with these symptoms should be taken to a doctor. *Cronobacter* bacteria can cause severe blood infections (sepsis) or meningitis.

Most people infected with *Salmonella* develop diarrhea, fever, and stomach cramps 12 to 72 hours after being exposed to the bacteria. The illness usually lasts four to seven days, and most people recover without treatment. In some people, the diarrhea may be so severe that the patient needs to be hospitalized. *Salmonella* infection may spread from the intestines to the bloodstream and then to other places in the body. Treatment for *Salmonella* identified from any source in an infant should be managed in collaboration with a pediatric or infectious disease specialist.

Transmission

People can become infected with *Cronobacter sakazakii* and *Salmonella* by consuming contaminated foods.

Diagnosis

Health care providers are asked to consider the diagnosis of *Cronobacter sakazakii* or *Salmonella* in persons who have consumed recalled formula and have clinically compatible illness and submit specimens for culture. Surveillance cultures are not indicated in exposed but asymptomatic infants.

Laboratories are asked to hold isolates positive for *Cronobacter sakazakii* for possible additional testing in infant cases that consumed powdered infant formula prior to illness. Laboratories are reminded that they must forward specimens positive for *Salmonella* to IDPH laboratories.

Healthcare Providers, IDPH, and LHD Response

Healthcare providers in Illinois should report any *Cronobacter sakazakii*-positive cultures in infants since November 1, 2020, as an unusual case or cluster immediately. For ongoing surveillance, *C. sakazakii* in infants aged less than one year are asked to be reported to their local health department as an unusual case or cluster. Information to report includes patient name and demographics, illness onset date, signs and symptoms, outcome, specimen collection date, and type of specimen (e.g., blood, CSF). Local health departments, in turn, are asked to enter the case in I-NEDSS as an “Unusual Illness” case and report the case to the IDPH Communicable Disease Control Section by phone.

Local health departments should obtain and report information about use of powdered infant formula (formula brand[s], lot number[s], “use by” date[s], date[s] of purchase, and location[s] of purchase) for any *C. sakazakii* cases in infants, as well as secure all recently and currently used containers of powdered infant formula associated with infant cases. A detailed questionnaire is available on the IDPH *Cronobacter* web portal page and should be completed on each infant. Completed questionnaires should be sent to DPH.Foodborne@illinois.gov.

Contact

For questions or additional information about this investigation, please contact the IDPH Communicable Disease Control Section at 217-782-2016. Clinicians should contact their [local health department](#) to identify prevention resources and to report cases.

Additional Resources

FDA

Advisory: <https://www.fda.gov/food/outbreaks-foodborne-illness/public-health-advisories-investigations-foodborne-illness-outbreaks>

Recall: <https://www.fda.gov/safety/recalls-market-withdrawals-safety-alerts/abbott-voluntarily-recalls-powder-formulas-manufactured-one-plant>

Cronobacter

IDPH Web Portal:

[https://dph.partner.illinois.gov/communities/communicabledisease/CDAZ/Pages/Cronobacter%20\(formerly%20Enterobacter%20sakazakii\).aspx](https://dph.partner.illinois.gov/communities/communicabledisease/CDAZ/Pages/Cronobacter%20(formerly%20Enterobacter%20sakazakii).aspx)

Cronobacter Outbreak Investigation Form:

https://dph.partner.illinois.gov/communities/communicabledisease/CDAZ/Documents/Cronobacter%20Outbreak%20Investigation%20Form_2018.pdf

CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/cronobacter/>

Salmonella

IDPH Web Portal:

<https://dph.partner.illinois.gov/communities/communicabledisease/CDAZ/Pages/Salmonellosis.aspx>

CDC Website: <https://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/>

Target Audience

Local Health Departments, Infectious Disease Physicians, Hospital Emergency Departments, Infection Preventionists, Health Care Providers, and Laboratories

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