

# ***Listeria* isolates possibly attributable to contaminated blood agar**

## **Target audience: Clinical laboratories**

Monday, March 4, 2013 (#1)

CDC has been notified by several states, including MI, OH, TN, WA, and FL, of *Listeria* isolates that appear to be attributable to contamination of sheep blood agar plates. Nine isolates were recovered from clinical specimens that are unusual sites for listeriosis, including urine, gastric isolate, and abscess; and the patients from whom these nine specimens were collected reportedly had no symptoms typical of listeriosis.

Several hospital laboratories noted that uninoculated plates had visible growth. FDA (U.S. Food and Drug Administration) is collaborating in the investigation and has been in contact with the manufacturer. We do not know at this time whether the manufacturer will recall the plates or if the FDA will ask for a recall. If we receive further information, we will send an update.

**Important reminder:** Listeriosis is a reportable disease (usually foodborne). All isolates of *Listeria* must be reported to the local health department, AND a pure culture on agar slant must be submitted to the MDCH lab in Lansing for molecular characterization to determine if the *Listeria* isolate is associated with an outbreak or other unusual incident such as this current developing situation.

## **Steps for laboratories to take now:**

- All clinical laboratories should check plated agar media for contamination, particularly TSA agar plates with 5% sheep blood.
- Notify the manufacturer if you discover any contaminated plates.
- Remember to report all *Listeria* isolates to the local health department
- Remember to send all *Listeria* isolates to MDCH laboratory

## **Questions and Additional Information:**

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