Salmonella Bareilly cases and bean sprouts

An outbreak control team led by the Health Protection Agency is continuing its investigation of an increase in cases of *Salmonella* Bareilly. Since the beginning of August 125 cases have been identified in the UK, of which 19 are in Scotland.

The investigation has found evidence of a link between the consumption of raw or under-cooked bean sprouts and the increase in cases of *S. Bareilly*. Also the strains of *S. Bareilly* isolated from these cases are indistinguishable from each other, indicating a common source of infection. *Salmonella* has been isolated from a bean sprout sample and further tests are taking place to establish if this is the same strain as the human cases.

As a precaution, the Food Standards Agency has reminded people of its advice on preparing and cooking bean sprouts, available at:


As well as information concerning routine consumption of bean sprouts, the guidance also recommends that vulnerable groups such as those who are immunosuppressed, the elderly, the very young, and pregnant women only consume bean sprouts which have been thoroughly cooked.

Spotlight on *Campylobacter*

*Campylobacter* species are the largest cause of bacterial gastroenteritis in the developed world.

The impact of this disease should not be underestimated. Numbers of cases have increased, and it is in any case likely to be underreported. About 10% of cases are hospitalised, and in up to two thirds of cases, musculoskeletal, joint swelling, or sensory problems and numbness are reported. In addition, *Campylobacter* spp contribute to 15% of all cases of Guillain-Barre syndrome.

Poultry meat has been identified as the main source of human disease (50—80% of cases), and studies on retail meats show a high prevalence (>65%) of *Campylobacter* spp in broilers. The European Food Safety Authority has recommended control programmes that address issues at farms and the slaughter process. Other sources are the environment in rural areas, and private water supplies.

In the meantime, illness can be prevented by:

- Cooking poultry thoroughly
- Preventing cross-contamination

Food hygiene advice can be accessed at:

http://www.eatwell.gov.uk/keepingfoodsafe
CEL 31 (http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/mels/CEL2008_31.pdf) details a number of changes and developments to strengthen and extend the Scottish newborn screening programmes. From 27 September, there will be two additions to the blood spot programme: Medium Chain Acyl CoA Dehydrogenase Deficiency (MCADD) and haemoglobinopathies.

**MCADD**: An inherited metabolic disorder which occurs with roughly the same incidence as PKU. It affects about 1 in 10,000 babies born in the UK and screening in Scotland is expected to detect 5 to 10 cases a year. The abnormality leads to an inability to metabolise sufficient energy from fat during periods of stress such as fasting, infection or surgery. It is a recognised cause of unexpected death in infancy and of acute encephalopathy in infancy requiring intensive care, which has significant subsequent morbidity and mortality. With dietary management individuals are expected to have a completely normal life.

**Haemoglobinopathies**: Are a large group of inherited blood disorders which affect the haemoglobin (oxygen carrying) component of blood. Neonatal screening is intended to identify newborns that are affected with sickle cell disorders in order to promptly institute penicillin prophylaxis and comprehensive care which has been shown to reduce morbidity and mortality. Antenatal screening for this will commence across NHS Highland in Spring 2011.

New patient information leaflets have been made available to all staff and are to be used from 27 September. Staff are asked to return old stock to the Health Information Resource Service at Assynt House, Inverness, after this date.

New blood spot cards have been distributed and remaining stocks of the pink cards should be returned to the laboratory at the following address: Newborn Screening Laboratory, Institute of Medical Genetics, Yorkhill Hospital, Glasgow, G3 8SJ. Please aim to return all pink cards to the Laboratory by Friday 15th October 2010.

Training slides will be uploaded onto the NHS Highland intranet. Any queries to Sally Amor, Public Health Specialist: sally.amor@nhs.net 01463 704819

Further information is also available at: http://www.pnsd.scot.nhs.uk  This website includes a training resource which has been developed to support NHS Boards with education and implementation.

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Comments, feedback and suggestions all welcome.