



UK Health Security Agency

Serial number: 2026/001

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Event: Infant Formula and Follow-On Formula recall due to possible cereulide toxin contamination

Notified by: Gastrointestinal Infections, Food Safety and One Health (GIFSOH)

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NIRP Level Standard

Incident Directors Vanessa Wong, Gauri Godbole

Instructions for Cascade:

- UKHSA Private Office Groups to cascade within Groups
- Devolved Administrations to cascade to Medical Directors and other DA teams as appropriate to their local arrangements
- UKHSA Lab Management Teams
- UKHSA Regional Communications
- Regional Deputy Directors to cascade to Directors of Public Health, Environmental Health Teams in local authorities and local Integrated Care Boards
- Integrated Care Boards to cascade to GPs, local pharmacies and NHS 111
- UKHSA microbiologists to cascade to non-UKHSA labs (NHS labs and private)
UKHSA microbiologists to cascade to NHS Microbiologists
- NHS infection leads/NHS microbiologist/NHS infectious diseases to cascade to appropriate clinical groups including Emergency Medicine, Paediatrics, Neonatology, and Paediatric Infectious Diseases
- Royal College of Emergency Medicine to cascade to members of the network
- Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health to cascade to members of the network
- Royal College Pathologists to cascade to members of the network
- Royal College of General Practitioners to cascade to members of the network

Summary

UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has been notified of the Food Standard Agency's public product recall alert of Nestlé SMA (Synthetic Milk adaption) Infant Formula and Follow-On

Formula, following Nestlé's precautionary measure because of possible presence of cereulide, an emetic toxin, produced by some strains of *Bacillus cereus*. The purpose of this communication is to ensure healthcare professionals are alert to the possibility of cases and aware of the national level investigation and its association with certain SMA products.

Background and Interpretation:

On 5th January 2026 Nestlé undertook a precautionary product recall of SMA Infant Formula and Follow-On Formula because of possible presence of cereulide, a toxin produced by some *Bacillus cereus* strains in several batches of the affected product. The product recall includes 12 SMA product types and has been distributed across the four nations of the UK and multiple countries across Europe. Approximately 1.3 million units of recalled product are expected to have been distributed across the England with a further 47,000 in Scotland, 34,000 in Wales and 13,000 in Northern Ireland. In addition, some batches may have been distributed to Ireland and other countries. Product batch numbers are outlined in the following links:

[Nestlé recalls several SMA Infant Formula and Follow-On Formula as a precaution because of the possible presence of cereulide \(toxin\) | Food Standards Agency](#)

[Consumer Recall Notice: SMA Infant Formula and Follow-On Formula | Nestlé UK & Ireland](#)

One of the formula products is a prescription product (SMA ALFAMINO 400 g) and Food Standards Agency (FSA) are liaising with The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to trace and replace the product.

Bacillus cereus is a spore-forming bacteria that can contaminate a range of food products and when allowed to grow, certain strains can produce cereulide toxin. Cereulide is an emetic, heat-stable toxin that is unlikely to be deactivated or destroyed by heat treatment when preparing infant milk. Illness can occur through ingestion of the preformed cereulide toxin sometimes in the absence of *Bacillus cereus* or bacteria, which multiply in the gastrointestinal tract and produce toxins.

Case definitions

Confirmed case = A person resident in the UK that has symptoms of gastroenteritis and has consumed a known contaminated or implicated batch of Nestlé SMA formula product with *Bacillus cereus* isolation from a clinical specimen and detection of cereulide toxin genes.

Probable case = A person resident in the UK that has symptoms of gastroenteritis and consumed a known contaminated or implicated batch of Nestlé SMA formula product

Possible case = A person resident in the UK that has symptoms of gastroenteritis and consumed any batch of Nestlé SMA formula product, other than the products on the recall list

Clinical presentation

Symptoms usually have a rapid onset between 15 minutes to up to 6 hours after ingestion. Generally, symptoms include nausea and vomiting, with a small proportion also reporting diarrhoea. The condition is mostly self-limiting, and symptoms usually resolve within 24 hours, without ongoing exposure to the cereulide toxin. Ingestion of the toxin rarely causes more significant illness, but a few cases of hepatic or renal injury, rhabdomyolysis and multi-organ failure have been reported. Individuals at high risk of complications include young children and the immunocompromised.

Management of possible cases

Parents and care givers should monitor for the rapid development of nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea if the affected products have been consumed by their child. Any product still available should not be consumed or touched and remain in their packaging.

Most symptomatic cases recover fully within 24 hours without needing to attend the GP surgery or hospital. Children should be kept hydrated and encouraged to continue to take frequent small amounts of fluids. They can be offered alternative formula or breast milk regularly.

If parents and care givers notice signs of severe dehydration in the child, then it is important to seek urgent medical attention to assess whether further care is necessary.

Children that present to healthcare with compatible symptoms and have reported consumption of a product listed in the food recall should be treated as a probable case for *Bacillus cereus*. Supportive care is the main management. Microbiological testing can be requested in admitted cases (as below). Antimicrobial therapy is generally not indicated in these food poisoning/gastroenteritis cases.

Food poisoning is notifiable. Admitted cases should be notified by phone to regional health protection teams ([Find your local health protection team in England - GOV.UK](#)). All other cases can be notified via the eNOIDS platform ([Report a notifiable disease - GOV.UK](#)).

Laboratory testing

Testing of clinical specimens

- **If a possible or probable case is admitted to hospital**, a faecal sample should be taken with a request to culture *Bacillus cereus*, in addition to routine testing for gastrointestinal pathogens as per local guidelines.
- Local NHS microbiology laboratories should follow their standard operating procedure (SOP) for isolating *Bacillus cereus* (e.g. use an ethanol shock step, followed by culture on PEMBA plates). If laboratories are unable to culture *Bacillus cereus* locally, they can request an SOP from UKHSA reference laboratories or refer samples to a suitable UKHSA public health laboratory for testing.
- Send any *Bacillus cereus* isolates from stool, or any sterile site, from a patient who is known to have consumed any product listed in the FSA recall to the Foodborne Pathogen Reference Service at the Gastrointestinal Bacteria Reference Unit (GBRU) at Colindale, UKHSA, for cereulide toxin PCR testing and typing: [L4 referral form](#)

Testing of Infant/Follow-On Formula

Any affected Nestlé product from the listed products on the FSA alert still available should be retained. The product should remain in its packaging and not be touched. The local Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) should be contacted and can arrange to collect it and send it to the Food, Water and Environmental Microbiology Services (FWEMS), UKHSA, for possible testing.

Implications and Recommendations for UKHSA Regions:

UKHSA Regions (HPTs) are asked to be aware of this outbreak and to share this briefing note as appropriate to their Local Authority Environmental Health Teams.

UKHSA regions may receive enquiries from the public if infants have consumed recalled products. Members of the public should be advised to check any remaining products for the batch numbers posted on the [FSA](#) and [Nestle](#)'s website and monitor their infant for compatible symptoms of *Bacillus cereus* as outlined above.

Any unopened remaining **product of recalled batch numbers** that was consumed by a confirmed case of *Bacillus cereus* should be retained and collected by local Environmental Health Officers for possible testing at Food, Water and Environmental Microbiology Services (FWEMS), UKHSA.

Health Protection Teams should be aware that they may receive an increased volume of calls from clinicians regarding suspected cases of *Bacillus cereus* infection. Advice can be provided as mentioned above.

Please inform GIFOH team at UKHSA of any reported case via the EEDD inbox: eedd@ukhsa.gov.uk. HPTs should link any cases on CIMS to the context: Record ID: 201051531.

Communications:

There is substantial public and media interest arising from the incident given proactive updates from FSA as lead agency and the manufacturer, Nestle.

Implications and Recommendations for UKHSA sites and services:

National and Regional reference laboratories should be aware that they may receive samples from patients being investigated for *Bacillus cereus* after having consumed recalled products, and should ensure any isolates are sent as soon as possible to the Foodborne Pathogen Reference Service at the Gastrointestinal Bacteria Reference Unit (GBRU) at Colindale, UKHSA.

Food Water & Environment laboratories may be asked to examine formula samples taken as part of local authority outbreak investigations.

Implications & Recommendations for NHS and diagnostic laboratories:

NHS 111 should be aware there could be increases in volumes of calls from concerned parents following feeding their children Nestlé SMA formula.

Diagnostic laboratories should be aware that they may receive faecal samples from patients being investigated for *Bacillus cereus* infection after having consumed recalled products and should ensure any *Bacillus cereus* isolates are sent to Foodborne Pathogen Reference Service at the Gastrointestinal Bacteria Reference Unit (GBRU) at Colindale, UKHSA.

NHS Trusts should share this notification with the relevant medical specialities, including Paediatrics, Neonatology, Emergency Medicine and Paediatric Infectious Diseases.

Implications and recommendations for Local Authorities:

Local authorities and Environmental Health Teams should be aware of the incident and may be asked to support the investigation by taking formula for testing where needed.
