

NEWS RELEASE



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Headline: Listeriosis prompts cheese recall

Recalled Mexican-style soft cheeses are from a Washington company

Oregon Public Health Division officials today are alerting consumers about a recall of Mexican-style cheese made by Queseria Bendita, a Yakima, Wash., company. The presence of *Listeria* bacteria in these products prompted the recall.

“All soft cheese products made by this company are being recalled,” said William Keene, Ph.D., M.P.H., a senior epidemiologist at the Oregon Public Health Division. “Consumers and food service providers who have any of these cheeses should discard them immediately or return them for a refund.” The recalled cheeses are labeled “Queso Fresco,” “Requeson” and “Panela.”

At least five listeriosis cases have been identified recently in Oregon and Washington. All five people had been hospitalized, but no deaths have been reported. Case investigations by public health agencies in both states identified Queseria Bendita cheese as a suspect, and subsequent testing of ready-to-eat products found matching organisms.

The recalled cheeses are sold primarily at Hispanic specialty markets in the greater Portland and Umatilla County areas, but may have been resold to Mexican restaurants or other outlets.

Queseria Bendita has ceased production and distribution of its products as the Washington State Department of Agriculture, the Food and Drug Administration and the company continue their investigations into what caused the problem.

Listeriosis is an infection that affects mostly older people, pregnant women, newborns and adults with weakened immune systems. However, people without these risk factors can also be affected. Symptoms include fever, muscle aches and sometimes gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea or diarrhea. If infection spreads to the nervous system, symptoms such as headache, stiff neck, confusion, loss of balance or convulsions can occur.

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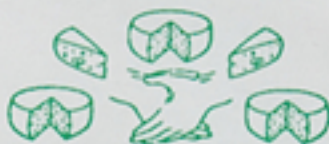
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Infected pregnant women may have only a mild illness, but infections during pregnancy can lead to miscarriage or stillbirth, premature delivery or infection of the newborn. Since 2000, an average of 10 cases of listeriosis per year have been reported in Oregon.

Consumers who have questions about the recall can call 509-574-8587, Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Oregon Health Division advises people who have eaten these products and have developed severe symptoms to contact a health care provider.

Note: A Spanish- (as well as English-) speaking expert is available for media interviews if needed.

Estila
QUESERIA BENDITA
Fresh Cheese



Queso Fresco

512 S. 3rd St., Yakima, WA 98901
(509) 574-8587

Ingredients: Pasteurized Milk, Salt, Rennet,
and Starter Culture

1 lb. Net Weight

Nutrition

Facts

Serv. Size 1 oz. (28g)
Servings 21
Calories 70
Fat Cal. 45

*Percent Daily Values
(DV) are based on a
2,000 calorie diet.

Amount/Serving	%DV*	Amount/Serving	%DV*
Total Fat 5g	8%	Total Carb. <1g	0%
Sat. Fat 4g	20%	Fiber 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	0%	Sugars <1g	
Cholest. 20 mg	7%	Protein 4g	
Sodium 240mg	10%		

Vitamin A 2% • Vitamin C 0% • Calcium 15% • Iron 0%



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