

# DIRTY KNIFE LINKED TO LISTERIA- CONTAMINATED SANDWICHES

TESTING  
REVEALED  
LISTERIA IN  
SANDWICHES IN  
HOSPITAL, AS WELL  
AS A COMMON  
KNIFE USED TO  
MAKE THEM



## KEEPING FOOD PRODUCTION EQUIPMENT CLEAN IS IMPORTANT

- Putting equipment away without cleaning and sanitizing is not good practice
- Viruses and bacteria such as *Listeria* can live for months on surfaces in restaurants if not cleaned and sanitized

A kitchen knife was the culprit behind *Listeria* bacteria found in sandwiches at a Middlemore Hospital café in Auckland, New Zealand during the first week of March 2008. Investigations by the Auckland Regional Public Health Service revealed that bacteria found in 20 sandwiches from the hospital's Aviary Café came from a contaminated knife used in the food supplier's processing plant.

The infected product was Naturezone Thai Chicken sandwiches that were sold at the café on Monday, March 3. Dr Greg Simmons of the Auckland Regional Public Health Service says the chiller containing the sandwiches at the café was closed after the incident and swabs were taken from the processing plant to identify the source of the contamination.

Dr Simmons says *Listeria* thrives in "virtually all wet situations", including in household and food service fridges. He also said inspection officers were satisfied with the standard of hygiene in the plant where the knife was found. "The plant was actually very tidy and clean...*Listeria* is a difficult organism." Just because a food production site appears to be clean and tidy doesn't mean that potentially harmful bacteria aren't around.

When large doses of bacteria are consumed, *Listeria* causes diarrhea, vomiting and fever. Pregnant women, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems are most at risk.

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