



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Region IV Public Health
Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, Wahkiakum counties
and Cowlitz Tribe

Health Advisory

Please deliver a copy of the accompanying alert to each provider in your organization.

Thank you

Questions regarding this alert may be directed to the office of:

Alan Melnick, MD, MPH
Health Officer

Jennifer Vines, MD, MPH
Deputy Health Officer

Clark County Public Health
Cowlitz County Health Department
Skamania County Health Department
Wahkiakum County Department of Health and Human Services
(360) 397-8412

Please Distribute

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for specific incident for situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Region IV Public Health
Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, Wahkiakum counties
and Cowlitz Tribe

HEALTH Advisory

May 23, 2011

TO: Pediatricians and Family Care Physicians

FROM: Alan Melnick, MD, MPH, CPH, Health Officer
Jennifer Vines, MD, MPH, Deputy Health Officer

RE: FDA Advisory

The FDA is advising parents, caregivers and healthcare providers not to feed SimplyThick, a thickening product, to premature infants. The product may cause necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC), a life-threatening condition.

FDA first learned of adverse events possibly linked to the product on May 13, 2011. To date, the agency is aware of 15 cases of NEC, including two deaths, involving premature infants who were fed SimplyThick for varying amounts of time. The product was mixed with mothers' breast milk or infant formula products. Illnesses have been reported from at least four different medical centers around the country.

The illnesses of which FDA is aware involve premature infants who became sick over the past six months. SimplyThick was added to the feeding regimen of those infants who later developed NEC to help with swallowing difficulties stemming from complications of premature birth. The current situation is unusual because NEC most often occurs in babies within the hospital early in their premature course. But among the ill babies FDA is aware of, some had been discharged from the hospital to home on a feeding regimen that included SimplyThick and then fell ill at home.

For more information, please see the FDA website:

<http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm256250.htm>.

Please report suspected cases to your local health jurisdiction:

- Clark County Public Health: (360) 397-8182.
- Cowlitz County Health Department: (360) 414-5599
- Skamania County Community Health: (509) 427-3850
- Wahkiakum County Health and Human Services (360) 795-6207