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Firm voluntarily recalls caramel apples due to possible contamination

Merb's Candies, a St. Louis, Mo., firm, is issuing a voluntary recall of the Merb's Candies brand Bionic Apples and Double Dipped Apples because they have the potential to be contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes*.

Although no cases have been reported in Illinois, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention has noted 30 illnesses in 10 states linked to an outbreak and they have advised consumers not to eat commercially produced, pre-packaged caramel apples until more is known.

Listeria monocytogenes is an organism which can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. Although healthy individuals may suffer only short-term symptoms such as high fever, severe headache, stiffness, nausea, abdominal pain and diarrhea, *Listeria* infection can cause miscarriages and stillbirths among pregnant women.

The product is individually packaged in a clear, burgundy and gold cellophane bag and would have been available from September 8th through November 25th 2014 – no identifying lot codes were used. The company has been working with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in its investigation of a current outbreak of Listeriosis, which has been associated with caramel apples. Bidart Brothers, who is one of Merb's Candies apple suppliers, has initiated a recall as there may be a connection between this outbreak of *Listeria Monocytogenes* and apples they supplied Merb's Candies.

The caramel apples produced are no longer available for purchase. However, any consumers that are still in possession of caramel apples should follow the advice of the CDC and dispose of the product in a secure container. Consumers who have any product may return it to the store where purchased or dispose of it per the advice of the CDC. Consumers with questions may contact the firm at customercare.merbscandies@gmail.com or during normal business hours Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. CST at (314) 832-7206.

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