



Canadian Food
Inspection Agency

Agence canadienne
d'inspection des aliments

Food Safety & Risk Communications:

Identifying Key Stakeholders and Audience Needs

Indo-Pacific Agriculture and Agri-Food Office



What is Risk Communication??

Definition:

An **interactive exchange of information and opinions** about risks among stakeholders—such as scientists, regulators, industry, and the public.

Purpose:

- Promote **understanding** of food safety risks.
- Support **informed decision-making**.
- Build **trust** and transparency.
- Enhance **preparedness** during food-related emergencies.

[FAO/WHO: The application of risk communication to food standards and safety matters](#)

Communications at the CFIA

- As a federal Agency, the CFIA's **Communications and Public Affairs** (CPA) branch adheres to the [Government of Canada's Policy on Communications and Federal Identity](#) managed by the Treasury Board Secretariat. Requirements include:
 - Providing timely, clear, objective, factual and non-partisan information
 - Providing information in both official languages in accordance with the relevant sections of the *Official Languages Act*
 - Integrating communications into emergency preparedness and crisis management planning
 - Collaborating on government-wide communications activities and initiatives
 - Communications with CFIA employees

Changing communications environment

- **Audience engagement:** Attention is on other socio-economic issues including high-cost of living and increasingly extreme weather
- **Media fragmentation:** Changes to traditional media models and social media platforms
- **Public trust:** Across the world we are seeing declining trust in governments, trust in media is also declining
- **Mis- and dis- information:** Intentional and unintentional sharing of wrong information impeding access to trustworthy, accurate information



Mis-information vs Dis-information

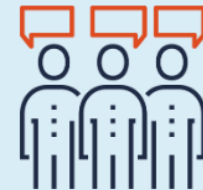
- The spread of wrong information can lead to policy failures and have serious consequences for health and safety
- Bad actors disseminating false information may do so:
 - to gain support for their policies and suppress criticism
 - to profit from creating engaging yet false or misleading content
 - to spread their own ideology or beliefs among the public
- Detect and correct
- Say what you know when you know it

MDM can be identified as three main forms of informational activity that can cause minor or major harm.

Misinformation refers to false information that is not intended to cause harm.

Disinformation refers to false information that is intended to manipulate, cause damage, or guide people, organizations, and countries in the wrong direction.

Malinformation refers to information that stems from the truth but is often exaggerated in a way that misleads and causes potential harm.



Perspective and context is everything




Importance of risk communication

- CFIA priorities: Public health, human health, animal health, and plant health
- Responsibility to inform = transparency and trust
- Proactive communications with scientific topics: It's complex!
- Need to balance scientific accuracy and timely information to Canadians about risks to support their decision making

Food safety and recall communication

- Public warnings are posted to the Recalls and safety alerts website:

<https://recalls-rappels.canada.ca/en>

- E-mail notifications are sent to subscribers for all recalls with a public warning and all allergen recalls
- All Class I, II and III recalls are posted on the Recalls and safety alerts website
- Recalls are also publicized on the CFIA's social media accounts   

What is the Importance of Risk Communication??

1. Why Risk Communication Matters

- Risk communication is **essential** for protecting public, human, animal, and plant health.
- It enables **timely, transparent, and trustworthy** information sharing during health threats or crises.
- Builds **public confidence** and supports informed decision-making.

What is the Importance of Risk Communication??

2. Responsibility to Inform = Transparency and Trust

- We have a **responsibility** to inform Consumers/Public/Stakeholders about risks.
- Transparency fosters **trust** between institutions and the public.
- Trust is critical during emergencies like disease outbreaks or biosecurity threats.

What is the Importance of Risk Communication??

3. Proactive Communication on Scientific Topics

- Health risks often involve **complex scientific information**.
- Proactive communication helps **demystify science** and reduce misinformation.
- It's not just about what we say, but **how and when** we say it.

What is the Importance of Risk Communication??

4. Balancing Accuracy and Timeliness

- Canadians need **accurate** information to make informed choices.
- But they also need it **quickly**—especially during fast-moving events.
- We must strike a balance between **scientific precision** and **timely delivery**.

What is the Importance of Risk Communication??

5. Cross-Sector Relevance

- **Public Health:** Communicating risks like pandemics, food safety, and environmental hazards.
- **Human Health:** Addressing personal health risks, medical guidance, and behavioral recommendations.
- **Animal Health:** Managing zoonotic diseases (e.g., HPAI), biosecurity, and veterinary alerts.
- **Plant Health:** Informing about invasive species, crop diseases, and agricultural biosecurity.

What is the Importance of Risk Communication??

6. Supporting Decision-Making

- Effective risk communication empowers individuals, communities, and stakeholders.
- It helps them **understand risks, evaluate options, and take appropriate actions.**

Risk communication at the CFIA

- The purpose of risk communication at CFIA is to enable people who may be at risk to make informed decisions that can help lessen the effects of a threat to their health and/or safety.

For example:

- HPAI in dairy cattle in the United States



[Government of Canada update on HPAI](#)

Learn more about proactive measures for HPAI in cattle

From inspection.Canada.ca

Guiding Principles for Food Safety Investigations

Timeliness

Appropriateness

Consistency

Thoroughness

Accuracy

Partnership

Transparency

What works

- **Developing tailored information**
 - Make strategic choices about messages and themes
 - Make sure content is appropriate for the intended audience
 - Remain flexible and adjust content based on changing science
- **Assembling the right team**
 - Ensure processes are set up in advance to respond quickly in a crisis
 - Include input and advice from across teams and areas of expertise
- **Regular and productive engagement with partners**
 - Create opportunity to coordinate efforts, collaborate on opportunities, and share knowledge
 - EX: One Health files such as Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) and Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)
- **Strategic, flexible and timely**
 - Timely and relevant communication products
 - Adjust products to evolve with the changing narratives and themes in media and social media
 - Take stakeholder feedback into consideration, listen to experts

What works

Tailored Information & Strategic Messaging

- Develop content specific to audience needs
- Make strategic choices about messages and themes
- Ensure content is appropriate and adaptable to evolving science

Team Assembly & Crisis Readiness

- Assemble a multidisciplinary team
- Set up processes for rapid crisis response
- Include input from diverse areas of expertise

What works

Partner Engagement & Collaboration

- Engage regularly and productively with partners
- Coordinate efforts and share knowledge
- Collaborate on One Health files (e.g., HPAI, AMR)

Timely & Flexible Communication Products

- Deliver relevant, timely products
- Adjust content based on media and social media narratives
- Incorporate stakeholder feedback and expert insights



MENU

Canada.ca > Health > Food and nutrition

Food safety

Learn safety tips for all food types. Also find information to protect those who are vulnerable to food poisoning.



Food safety education

Health Canada's role in food safety education, and what resources are available to improve food safety

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and food safety

Safe food practices, safe food shopping, home food delivery, online food shopping

Safe cooking temperatures

Prevent food poisoning by using a digital thermometer to check cooked meat, poultry and seafood for a safe internal temperature.

Food safety for vulnerable populations

How to prevent food poisoning in seniors, children, pregnant women and those with weak immune systems.

General food safety tips

Handling, storing and preparing food, and information about pesticides, food safety, labels and allergies.

Food safety for fruits and vegetables

Handling fruits and vegetables to prevent food poisoning, and the health risks of unpasteurized juice and cider.

Meat, poultry, fish and seafood safety

Cooking tips for meat, poultry, eggs, fish and seafood.

Seasonal food safety

Food safety risks for each season, including the school year, summer, Halloween and holiday season.

Milk and infant formula

About powdered infant formula and raw (unpasteurized) milk.

Food and drinking water safety in an emergency

Take steps before, during and after an emergency to protect your family from foodborne illness.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) and food safety

Food safety and information about Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

Did you find what you were looking for?

Yes

No

From: Recalls / Rappels <recalls-rappels@notification.canada.ca>

Date: September 14, 2025 at 4:10:06 AM GMT+8

To:

Subject: Your latest Recalls and Safety Alerts from the Government of Canada



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

Hello,

Here are new and/or updated Recalls and alerts that match your subscription settings:

[Shaikh Al Kar brand Tahini recalled due to Salmonella \(updated\)](#)

Product: Tahini

Issue: Salmonella

Distribution: British Columbia

Audience: General public

[Shaikh Al Kar brand Plain Halva recalled due to Salmonella \(updated\)](#)

Product: Plain Halva

Issue: Salmonella

Distribution: Alberta, British Columbia

Audience: General public

[Co-op brand White Tray Buns recalled due to undeclared milk \(new\)](#)

Product: White Tray Buns

Issue: Milk

Distribution: Manitoba

Audience: General public

[Modify](#) your existing subscription.

No longer wish to subscribe to this service? [Unsubscribe](#).

Core information

- **Product:** name, format, code, BBD/expiry date, packaging
- **Company:** name, type of company, complaint records, return policy
- **Production:** quantities, lot code applied and how it's deciphered, production date, definition of lot, process information
- **Distribution:** quantities distributed, area, types of clients
- **Complaint Details** (if applicable)
- **Reported Reaction / Illness / Injury** (if applicable)

Notification

Carole's Cheesecake Company brand Pistachio cheesecakes recalled due to Salmonella

► Brand(s)

Last updated: 2025-11-07

Summary



Product: Pistachio cheesecake

Issue: Food - Microbial contamination - Salmonella

What to do: Do not use, sell, serve or distribute the affected products.

Audience: Hotels, restaurants and institutions

Distribution: British Columbia
Ontario

Affected products

Filter items Showing 1 to 3 of 3 entries | Show entries

Brand	Product	Size	UPC	Codes
Carole's Cheesecake Company	Pistachio Eggless Cheesecake	2.3 kg	1 00 63594 00853 3	25-233
Carole's Cheesecake Company	Pistachio Cheesecake	2 kg	1 00 63594 00288 8	25-212
Carole's Cheesecake Company	Pistachio Cheesecake	8 x 500 g	1 00 63594 18965 7	25-213; 25-248

Issue

Carole's Cheesecake Company brand pistachio cheesecakes recalled due to *Salmonella*.

This recall is linked to an ongoing investigation into a foodborne illness outbreak. Please refer to the [Food Safety Investigation](#) page for further details and related recall notifications and food recall warnings.

Notification

Arvinda's brand Tandoori Masala recalled due to undeclared sesame

► Brand(s)

Last updated: 2025-11-06

Summary



Product: Tandoori Masala

Issue: Food - Allergen - Sesame seeds

What to do: Do not use, sell, serve or distribute the affected products.

Audience: Retail

Distribution: Online

British Columbia

Ontario

Quebec

Affected products

Filter items Showing 1 to 2 of 2 entries | Show entries

Brand	Product	Size	UPC	Codes
Arvinda's	Tandoori Masala	45 g	8 54898 00151 5	08506031; Use by 10 2026
Arvinda's	Tandoori Masala	70 g	8 54898 00108 9	08506031; Use by 10 2026

23

Issue

Arvinda's brand Tandoori Masala recalled due to undeclared sesame.

Issue

The affected product is being recalled from the marketplace due to possible *Salmonella* contamination.

What you should do

- If you think you became sick from consuming a recalled product, contact your healthcare provider
- Check to see if you have recalled products
- Do not consume, serve, use, sell, or distribute recalled products
- Recalled products should be thrown out or returned to the location where they were purchased

Food contaminated with *Salmonella* may not look or smell spoiled but can still make you sick. Young children, pregnant women, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems may contract serious and sometimes deadly infections. Healthy people may experience short-term symptoms such as fever, headache, vomiting, nausea, abdominal cramps and diarrhea. Long-term complications may include severe arthritis.

Learn more:

- [Learn more about the health risks](#)
- [Sign up for recall notifications by email and follow us on social media](#)
- [View our detailed explanation of the food safety investigation and recall process](#)
- [Report a food safety or labelling concern](#)

Additional information

- ▶ Background
- ▶ What is being done
- ▶ Details
- ▶ Media and public enquiries

Get notified

Receive emails about new and updated recall and safety alerts.

Changing communications environment

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Best practices for health and science communications:

1. Identify and prepare for risks before they happen.
2. Work with your communications team if you have one; they can help support efficient, cohesive planning and narrative building. This also includes
 - **Audience identification and approach:** who you are trying to reach and where you will be able to reach them. Include actions the audience can take to help lessen their risk.
 - Providing content in **plain language:** The information has to be accessible and easily comprehensible.

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Partner work and resources

- [Canada's Digital Citizen Initiative – Online disinformation and other online harms and threats](#)
- [World Health Organisation \(WHO\) - Understanding the infodemic and misinformation](#)
- [WHO Infodemic Manager training \(online\)](#)
- [WHO Risk Communication Essentials \(online\)](#)
- [World Organisation for Animal Health \(WOAH\) - The next big threat to animal health emergencies: misinformation and disinformation](#)
- [WOAH Risk Communication: a key element in the response to ASF](#)
- [American Journal of Public Health – Where We Go From Here: Health Misinformation on Social Media](#)
- [Pan American Health Organization – Risk and Outbreak Communication](#)



Thank you! Questions?

