

Health **FAX**

Cronobacter sakazakii

Attention: **Hospital Emergency Departments**
Date: April 20, 2011

The Public Health Agency of Canada was notified by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of an investigation into two cases of *Cronobacter sakazakii* (formerly known as *Enterobacter sakazakii*) meningitis in Michigan (one illness) and Ohio (one illness) with estimated onset dates of March 25th and March 26th, 2011 respectively. The two cases were 11 and 54 days of age at illness onset. Typically the CDC is aware of approximately four cases annually; therefore, it is unusual to be notified of two infant cases with similar onset dates.

Because severe illness in infants has been reported, we felt it is important to share this information with you and selected health care providers in your area. There is no surveillance for *C. sakazakii* in Canada, at this time the ministry would like to have all confirmed cases of *C. sakazakii* reported to local health units and subsequently to the province.

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit is requesting any suspect or confirmed cases of *C. sakazakii* be reported to public health. Please contact the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit Communicable Disease Phone Line at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 Ext. 8809.

Bacterial meningitis (all causes) is reportable and the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit must be notified immediately in order to ensure timely investigation.

Additional information on the *Cronobacter sakazakii**

Cronobacter sakazakii has been linked to incidences of infant meningitis and necrotising enterocolitis - most likely caused by post-processing contamination of milk-based infant formula or feed. As a member of the *Enterobacteriaceae* it is susceptible to heat and therefore does not survive the production processes involved in manufacturing of formula.

However, it is widespread in the environment and can contaminate product post-processing either from heat sensitive additives such as micronutrients, from the general factory environment or during reconstitution of the powder prior to use. Subsequent incorrect handling of the rehydrated feed can result in sickness especially in vulnerable age groups such as neonates.

*Source: <http://www.rapidmicrobiology.com/test-methods/Cronobacter-sakazakii.php>