

83 Britons report rare food poisoning

July 9 2006

At least 83 people in England, Scotland and Wales have a rare Salmonella food poisoning, more than 10 times the normal level for an entire year.

Mostly concentrated in London and southeast England, the people who contracted the rare Salmonella ajiobo range in age from 2 to 80, the Guardian reported Saturday. They include twice as many girls and women as men.

Britain's Health Protection Agency says it does not know the cause of the outbreak.

"We are investigating it as a food poisoning outbreak," a spokesman said.

The alert came two weeks after Britain's Food Standards Agency forced Cadbury Ltd. to withdraw a million chocolate bars from seven product lines following unusually high levels of Salmonella poisoning in Britain from a different strain.

Salmonella ajioba is a highly rare type of Salmonella, with only about seven British cases typically reported in a year among people who have not traveled abroad. Since June 20, there have been 75 cases in England and Wales and eight in Scotland, the Guardian said.

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