

# Ask a Patient Health News October 2 2022

## Health News: October 2, 2022

- A safety recall was announced for **brie** and **camembert cheese** made by Old Europe Cheese, Inc. and sold under **multiple brand names** at multiple retail outlets. Listeria illnesses have been linked to the cheese. "Best By" dates range from September 28, 2022 to December 14, 2022.

<https://www.cdc.gov/listeria/outbreaks/monocytogenes-09-22/index.html>

- Japanese drugmaker Eisai announced that its experimental drug for **Alzheimer's** disease helped slow cognitive decline in patients in the early stages of the illness. In a phase 3 clinical trial, lecanemab slowed cognitive decline by 27% after 18 months. The antibody-based drug targets amyloid plaques, clumps of protein in the brain.

The results, which have not yet been peer-reviewed, were based on a trial of 1,795 patients, who were randomly assigned to receive either the drug or a placebo every two weeks over 18 months. Cognitive decline was measured using a clinical dementia rating scale that focused on six areas: memory, orientation, judgment and problem solving, community affairs, home and hobbies, and personal care. Eisai will present the findings at an Alzheimer's conference in late November and that it plans to submit the trial data to the FDA for approval by March. U.S. company Biogen is Eisai's marketing partner. Many experts say the results should be reviewed cautiously.

<https://www.biopharmadive.com/news/lecanemab-alzheimers-patients-doctors-impact-eisai-biogen/632952/>

- As of Friday, September 30, the CDC reports 25,851 cases of **Monkeypox** in the U.S.; the daily increase in cases is declining, but still averages over 150 cases a day. Two weeks ago, the case count was 20,349. Global case count: 68,428 cases (52,090 two weeks ago). The U.S. has the most cases, followed by Brazil, Spain, France, U.K., and Germany.

Check maps for case counts by state or country:

[U.S. Map](#) with case counts by state

[World Map](#) with case count by country

## Medical Device Sterilization & Cancer

- A Cook County, Illinois jury ruled that medical device sterilization company **Sterigenics** must pay \$363 million to 70-year old breast cancer survivor Susan Kamuda, in the first of nearly 800 lawsuits filed against the company. Kamuda claimed that [ethylene oxide gas \(EtO\)](#) emitted by the company for decades near her home in Willowbrook caused her breast cancer. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other organizations have established **ethylene oxide** as a carcinogen.

<https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/sue-kamuda-toxic-gas-sterigenics-cancer/>

- Surgical and medical devices made of plastic or those with hard-to-reach or heat-sensitive surface areas, like catheters, endoscopes, cardiac stents, and implants, cannot be sterilized using other available methods like **autoclave** steam pressure chambers. The FDA says that ethylene oxide is used to sterilize 20 billion devices sold in the U.S. every year, accounting for about **50 percent** of devices that require sterilization. In August 2022, the

FDA announced efforts to find alternatives to ethylene oxide sterilization methods.

<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-continues-efforts-support-innovation-medical-device-sterilization>

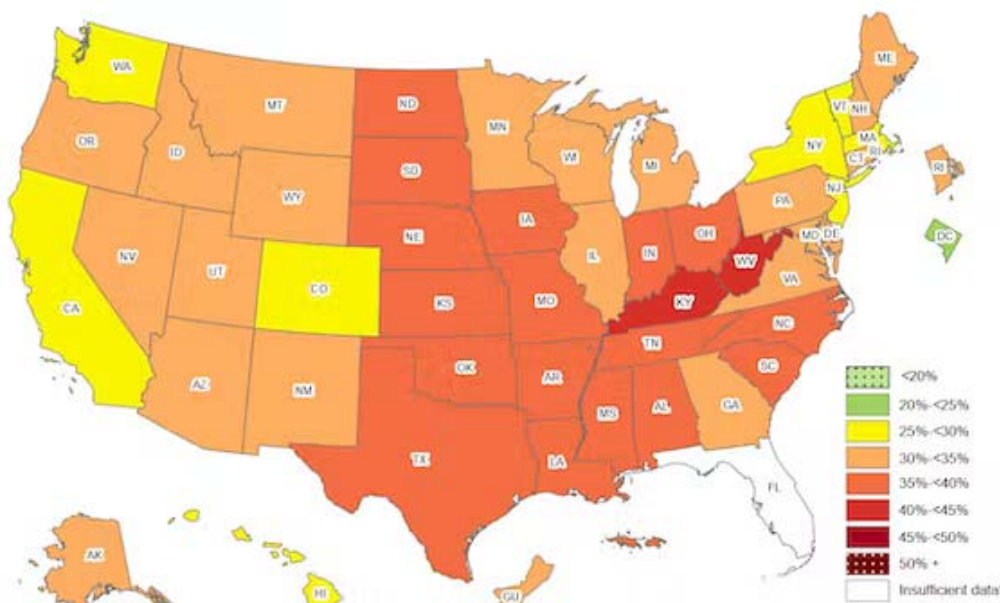


Example of ethylene-oxide (ETO) sterilization facility in Tijuana, Mexico, which is the largest medical device manufacturing center in North America. (Image Source: [Pisa-Usa.com](https://www.pisa-usa.com) press release announcing expansion of Centerpiece facility.)

- St. Louis-based **Centene Corp.**, the nation's largest Medicaid managed-care insurer, will pay \$14.2 million to Massachusetts to settle allegations that its **pharmacy benefits manager business**, Envolve Pharmacy Solutions, overbilled the state's **Medicaid** program. In July, it settled with the state of Texas for \$166 Million over similar allegations. Centene has also settled with Arkansas, Illinois, Kansas, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Texas, and Washington for an amount totaling **\$475 million**.

<https://khn.org/news/article/centene-massachusetts-medicaid-drug-settlement/>

- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that the number of states with a high prevalence of **obesity** has more than doubled since 2018. Nineteen states and two territories have at least 35% of residents with adult obesity, based on self-reported height and weight data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.





- A study from the T.H. Chan Harvard School of Public Health found that individuals **with obesity who lost weight**, regardless of the method used (such as exercise, diet, diet pill, or combination), tended to have a **lower diabetes risk over the long term**. For obese individuals, **exercise** as the primary method of weight loss was associated with the least weight gain and the lowest Type 2 diabetes risk. Surprisingly, **lean individuals who intentionally lost weight** tended to have a **higher Type 2 diabetes risk** over the long term. The study was published in *PLOS Medicine*.

<https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1004094>

- University of Bristol researchers created a "DNA repair-kit" that fixed genetic mutations related to **Steroid Resistant Nephrotic Syndrome** (SRNS) in patient-derived kidney cells. Hereditary SRNS is a devastating kidney disease affecting children and young adults, causing rapid onset of kidney failure and requiring dialysis and transplantation. The study was published in *Nucleic Acids Research*.

<https://www.bristol.ac.uk/news/2022/july/dnarepair-kit.html>

- Using a **frozen embryo for in vitro fertilization** (IVF) may substantially raise the mother's risk for pregnancy complications related to **high blood pressure**, according to a recent study led by Norwegian University of Science and Technology. Compared to women who conceived naturally, those who used frozen embryos during IVF were 74% more likely to develop hypertensive disorders during pregnancy, while those who used fresh embryos did not see an increased risk. The study included a comparison of siblings conceived with both fresh and frozen embryos that led researchers to conclude the higher risk was associated with the in vitro fertilization, or IVF, process and not a risk factor associated with the parents. The study was published in *Hypertension*.

<https://www.heart.org/en/news/2022/09/26/frozen-embryo-in-vitro-fertilization-may-raise-risk-for-high-blood-pressure-during-pregnancy>

### Probiotics & Enzymes Supplements: Part 2

**Probiotics** help to maintain a balance between 'good' and the 'bad' gut bacteria, while **digestive enzymes** break down complex nutrients into smaller particles that your body can absorb.



### Who might benefit from enzymes supplements?

Morgan Denhard, a registered dietitian at Johns Hopkins Medicine says that "Overall, a healthy person really doesn't need to take digestive enzyme supplements. The best digestive enzymes are the ones our bodies make naturally, and they work best when you eat a whole food diet."

On the other hand, some people with particular digestive issues have had improvement in symptoms when taking over-the-counter enzyme supplements. Enzymes may be appropriate supplements for those with **lactose intolerance**. As we age, we may not produce enough of certain enzymes, leading to conditions like lactose intolerance that make it hard for us to digest milk and dairy products. Other digestion-related symptoms that may indicate a potential benefit from enzyme supplements include acid reflux, bloating, frequent burping, oily stools, and food sensitivities (such as to high "FOD-MAP" foods). Those who follow a **vegetarian or vegan diet** may also benefit from an enzyme supplement to more effectively digest cellulose.

**Digestive enzymes** are made in our salivary glands, stomach, small intestine and pancreas. Examples include:

**Amylase:** Made in the salivary glands and pancreas; it breaks down starches

**Lipase:** Made in the pancreas; it breaks down fats; supports gallbladder

**Protease:** Made in stomach and pancreas; it breaks down proteins into single amino acids

**Lactase:** Made in the small intestine; it breaks down lactose; supports dairy digestion

**Sucrase (Invertase):** Made in the small intestine; it breaks down sucrose (sugars)

An example not made naturally by human body, but found in some supplements:

**Cellulase:** it helps break down cellulose found in fruits and vegetables

### **Who might benefit from probiotics supplements?**

Probiotics might be appropriate for use by those with irritable bowel syndrome, antibiotic-related diarrhea, traveler's diarrhea, or weakened immune systems. They may also help maintain general digestive health for those without any digestive symptoms. You might find probiotics in yogurt or other food products or as a shelf-stable supplement in pill, powder, or capsule form. (Note: all yogurts will contain the beneficial live cultures

**Lactobacillus bulgaricus** and **Streptococcus thermophilus**.)

### **Examples of "lactic acid-producing" bacteria found in some supplements along with potential benefits:**

**Lactobacillus acidophilus:** Maintains integrity of small intestine walls; this is the most prevalent species of probiotic

**Lactobacillus fermentum:** Helps neutralize toxic products made during digestion, promotes a healthy balance of bacteria in the gut

**Lactobacillus rhamnosus:** Called the "travel probiotic" because it has been found to be effective in reducing occurrences of traveler's diarrhea

**Bifidobacteria bifidum:** Promotes healthy digestion in both small and large intestines; especially helpful for proper digestion of dairy

**Bifidobacteria longum:** Helps crowd out bad bacteria, helps neutralize everyday toxins in the gut, breaks down carbohydrates without producing excess gas

**Bifidobacterium animalis** (In Dannon **Activia** yogurts, the trademarked name is **Bifidus regularis** in the U.S.): Helps avoid constipation

### **Example of "spore-forming" bacteria found in some dietary supplements:**

**Bacillus subtilis:** Survives the effects of stomach acid and body temperature to reach the large intestine.

Produces helpful enzymes inhibits growth of *H. pylori*, an organism associated with the occurrence of ulcers.