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## Study Finds Staphylococcus in Raw Meat:

**At a Glance:** Last week the Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGen), an Arizona-based non-profit released the findings on a study on 136 meat samples, covering 80 brands, from 26 grocery stores in five states. The study, supported through a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts, found 47% of the samples contaminated with *Staphylococcus aureus*, and about half of those bacteria were resistant to some antibiotics. These findings have been widely reported by the media as drug resistant bacteria common in meat.

**The Issue:** *Staphylococcus aureus* (*Staph*) is a common bacterium found on the skin and in the noses of up to 25% of healthy people and animals. When Staph contaminate food, it can produce a toxin that causes food poisoning. According to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria change in some way that reduces or eliminates the effectiveness of drugs used to cure or prevent infections. While the FDA and USDA are aware of the TGen study and have not made any comment, the study has received a great deal of criticism from the industry and the scientific community. Main source of criticism is that the broad conclusions are not supported by the study or findings.

**Am I Impacted?** It's up to you. Most foods, including meat, carry a number of microorganisms naturally. While some of these microorganisms are helpful, others can cause foodborne illness. That's why there are some basic food safety rules that must be followed by when handling all foods. These rules include keeping hot foods hot and cold foods cold, cooking foods to proper temperature, avoiding cross-contamination between raw and cooked foods, washing hands before handling raw meats and before handling other non-raw foods food utensils or eating. If proper hygienic practices are followed at your establishment you are not likely to be impacted by Staph or any other foodborne bacteria.

**US Foodservice Position:** Food safety is a foundational value at U.S. Foodservice. To that end we go to great length to ensure that the products we sell have the maximum food safety when they arrive at your establishment. However, we rely on you to do your part to ensure that the safety of those products is maintained from receiving, through storage, preparation and service. It is also vitally important that your employees follow the food safety rules to ensure that food remains safe throughout. Because in the end, food safety can only be achieved if we approach it as a partnership between us, your supplier and you our customer.

**What You Can Do:** make sure that you and your staff follow the basic food safety rules

- Keep raw meats separated from all ready to eat foods or equipment/ utensils
- Wash hands thoroughly after handling any raw meat product and before handling any other meat product or equipment
- Clean and sanitize cutting boards, knives, utensils, and countertops after meat cutting or handling
- Stress the prevention of cross-contamination
- make sure that all employees wash their hand before eating
- Purchase all of your supplies from a company with a strong food safety and robust recall program that can keep you aware of recall and food safety issues
- Finally, count on partnering with U.S. Foodservice to keep food safe

Help us serve you better. Provide your distribution center with a valid email address so we may reach you with recall and food safety information.