

Taco Bell removing lettuce in all stores nationwide linked to cyclosporiasis in five states

Kentucky is one of 5 states identified in outbreak

Jennifer Shutt
States Newsroom

WASHINGTON — The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced Friday that public health officials have linked the ongoing outbreak of cyclosporiasis in five states to shredded iceberg lettuce from Taco Bell restaurants.

The fast food chain wrote in a statement that it plans to remove the “potentially impacted lettuce” from its “supply chain nationwide and will be replaced within 24 hours in select states.”

“While no official advisory has been issued, we believe public health is a shared responsibility among restaurants, their suppliers, and authorities, and we are proud to have consistently acted quickly and proactively to protect our guests,” the statement said. “Taco Bell has taken precautionary action, and we encourage all relevant restaurants, retailers, and foodservice operators to do the same.”

The CDC statement said it had linked the ongoing outbreak to Taco Bell restaurants in Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and West Virginia. The statement didn’t say whether the lettuce was the cause of the severe gastrointestinal illness caused by a parasite in other states.

Taylor Farms wrote in a statement that based on information from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration “Taylor Farms de Mexico is voluntarily removing all iceberg lettuce sourced from central Mexico.”

“While the FDA traceback is indicating a specific independent farm that represents less than 1% of the U.S.’s iceberg lettuce supply as the potential source of the outbreak, we have removed all iceberg lettuce from the region indefinitely,” the statement said.

Taylor Farms added that none of their “salads or kits are associated with this outbreak.”

The CDC has confirmed more than 1,600 cases in 34 states since the outbreak began. Nearly 150 of those people were hospitalized, though no deaths have been reported so far.

The CDC writes on a webpage about the outbreak that it expects the number of confirmed cases will continue to increase given the six-week “reporting lag between illness onset and case reporting to CDC.”
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State unemployment rate rises in June

Tom Latek
Kentucky Today

FRANKFORT, Ky. (KT) – Kentucky saw an increase in the state’s unemployment rate in June, according to the Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS), an agency within the Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet.

The preliminary June 2026 jobless rate was 4.7 percent, up 0.2 percent from the 4.5 percent reported in May, and up 0.1 percentage points from one year ago.

The U.S. seasonally adjusted jobless rate for June 2026 was 4.2 percent, which was down from the 4.3 percent recorded for May, but up from the 4.1 percent recorded in June 2025, the U.S. Department of Labor reported.

Labor force statistics, including the unemployment rate, are based upon estimates from the Current Population Survey of households. The survey is designed to measure trends in the number of people working and includes jobs in agriculture and individuals who are self-employed.

Kentucky’s civilian labor force was 2,097,681 in June 2026, an increase of 616 individuals from May. The number of people employed in June was 1,999,481, a decline of 4,175 from May. The number of unemployed was 98,200, an increase of 4,791 from May.

University of Kentucky Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) Director Mike Clark said, “The increase reflects a weaker labor market as fewer workers reported having a job and more reported that they were actively looking for work. The estimated number of Kentucky workers employed has decreased during each of the first six months of 2026.”

In a separate federal survey of business establishments that excludes jobs in agriculture and people who are self-employed, Kentucky’s seasonally adjusted nonfarm employment increased by 100 jobs to 2,030,400 in June compared to May. Kentucky’s nonfarm employment was down 6,600 jobs or 0.3% compared to June 2025.

“Businesses reported slightly higher total nonfarm employment levels for June,” Clark noted. “The difference was small suggesting that total employment was essentially unchanged from May. However, several sectors including professional and business services, education and health services, and manufacturing reported weaker employment. These losses were offset by large employment gains in arts, entertainment and recreation.”

Kentucky’s statewide unemployment rate and employment levels are seasonally adjusted. Employment statistics undergo sharp fluctuations due to seasonal events, such as weather changes, harvests, holidays, and school openings and closings. Seasonal adjustments eliminate these influences and make it easier to observe statistical trends.

ADVICE

Visits to husband’s grandkids have lost their appeal



Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I’m 56 years old and have been married for 12 years. I don’t want to drive an hour and a half to spend time with my husband’s grandbabies. I have done that on many occasions and choose not to do it anymore. I’m not into babies — or children, for that matter. He continues to ask me to go and can’t understand why I don’t want to. I have no problem with him going (I encourage him to go), but he won’t let up on me, and it’s driving me away. Am I wrong to prefer not to go? — CHILD-FREE IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR CHILD-FREE: Has it occurred to you that your husband may not want to drive an hour and a half to visit the “grandbabies” any more than you do? He may need you for backup. Sometimes in a marriage, we do things for our partner that may not be our favorite pastime, but we do it for love. You should not have to make that pilgrimage every time your husband does, but the nice thing to do would be to accompany him more times than not. And do it with a

smile.
* * * * *

DEAR ABBY: My husband is serving a life sentence, with the possibility of parole. He turned himself in a year and a half ago for a crime that happened 15 years ago.

I met someone seven months ago. This man is involved in his church and has a ministry in which he feeds the homeless. I’m not sure at this point what our future holds. I feel so guilty at times. Please help. Any advice would be greatly appreciated. — CONFLICTED IN GEORGIA

DEAR CONFLICTED: This is something I think you should discuss with your incarcerated husband. When you do, explain that you don’t think you can live like a widow, possibly for decades. Decide together how you should proceed. However, please remember you have been involved with this new person for a relatively short time, and there is no guarantee that your relationship will become permanent.
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DEAR ABBY: Our friend “Leo” married a girl who treats him poorly. She degrades him in front of people about his finances, weight, looks, etc. They have been married only a couple of years and have no kids. Leo is a great person, and

his mental health is getting beaten down daily. Should we say something to him? We want him to know we would support him if he wanted to divorce her. He has limited family — his friends are family. — STEPPING UP IN IDAHO

DEAR STEPPING UP: Because you and Leo’s other friends believe he is being abused, I see no reason to remain silent and pretend it isn’t happening. An intervention may be called for, as well as an opportunity to reinforce the message that you are all there for him regardless of what he chooses to do about his marriage.
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Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.
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Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: “Abby’s Favorite Recipes” and “More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby.” Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$16 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 446, Kings Mills, OH 45034-0446. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Kentuckians with disabilities, advocates say looming 4% Medicaid cut is a ‘threat’

Sarah Ladd
Kentucky Lantern

FRANKFORT — Kentuckians with disabilities and their loved ones and advocates came to Frankfort Friday and pleaded with elected officials to find a way to protect the services they receive through Medicaid waivers.

Several spoke during a legislative subcommittee meeting, which was formed to handle issues surrounding waiver waitlists, and many more spoke at a town hall meeting and rally on the Capitol Annex steps. Organizers estimated hundreds attended these events.

Laura Orsland, the mother of a son with disabilities who founded the HIVE in Bowling Green to support “people with developmental disabilities and those who care for them,” said the looming 4% cuts to the providers who help her family and others “is not just a number to us. It’s a threat.”

“It is a warning,” she said. “It is the sound of one more piece of stability slipping away.”

A June 8 letter from the Cabinet for Health and Family Services informed various providers they would see a 4% reduction in Medicaid reimbursement starting Aug. 1. Reductions are set to target the following waivers, in addition to providers in other sectors:

Home and Community Based Waiver, which provides services to Kentuckians 65 and older or those who are physically disabled and need a nursing facility level of care.

Michelle P. Waiver, which provides services for Kentuckians with intellectual or developmental disabilities who need nursing facility or immediate care facility level of care.

Model II Waiver, which provides services for people needing ventilator support 12 or more hours a day, are on a physician-monitored weaning program and need a nursing facility level of care.

Supports for Community Living, which provides services for Kentuckians with intellectual or developmental disabilities who need immediate care facility level of care.

Meanwhile, families who need waiver services said it’s already difficult to find providers able to care for them and their loved ones.

Leslie Hoffmann, the deputy commissioner of the Department for Medicaid Services, said there were nearly 19,000 people on waitlists for Medicaid waivers as of July 13, with only around 1,000 spots available.

Year over year, the cost of waiver services and Medicaid claims have increased from around \$492,000 per person in 2020 to around \$607,166 in 2025, Hoffmann said in a presentation to members of the Waiver Waitlist Management Subcommittee on Friday morning. Total annual expenditures for these services hit nearly \$1.9 billion in 2025 even as many spend years on waitlists waiting for care.

Dr. Steven Stack, the secretary for the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, said solutions to the waitlist and other issues come back to money.

“If you shed tears over the size of the Medicaid budget now, some of the ways we could make all of these problems go away would make you shed buckets of tears about how much larger the cost would be,” he said.

‘I am a person’

Grace Anna Rodgers, a singer who has Michelle P. Waiver services and uses a wheelchair, told those gathered for the Friday afternoon town hall: “Don’t ever feel sorry for yourself, because we are still human beings.”

“A lot of people see people like me as somebody who, ‘oh she’s in a wheelchair, she can’t do anything,’ but we thrive and we love to do things,” she said. “I play piano, I sing and I love doing it. I am a person.”

Claire Mynear, who has autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), obsessive compulsive disorder and other diagnoses, said she waited 15 years to get her Michelle P. Waiver.

“I need the services to help me to be able to do the things like to be independent and see friends and do things that I like to do out in the community, and that helps me be able to go out when I have services,” said Mynear, 34. “I like doing a lot of Special Olympic sports and stuff.”

Gov. Andy Beshear has blamed the budget passed by the General Assembly this year for forcing his hand toward the cuts, while lawmakers have said he could better manage the money they provided.

Judi Gerding, the founder and CEO of The Point Arc in Northern Kentucky, questioned the state’s spending priorities.

“Kentucky has been known for horses and bourbon. Let us channel that same energy and wealth into becoming the nation’s leading state for our most vulnerable people,” she said. “What good are new buildings, parks and highways if the people who need them most cannot access or benefit from them?”

Several families asked that leaders find a way to work together and reverse the cut.

“I’m asking everyone who has a voice in this decision to look beyond the blame and look at the result. Forget the political back and forth for a minute, and look at the human beings standing in the middle of it,” said Orsland, the Bowling Green advocate.

“Look at the disabled adults who depend on these services to live. Look at the parents who are terrified of what happens next. Look at the siblings, the workers, the families, the people whose lives hang in the balance,” she said. “My son is not a line item, and my family is not a talking point. People with disabilities are not statistics. They are multidimensional, sentient human beings that deserve dignity, safety and care. And they deserve better than cuts that make life harder, lonelier and more fragile.”
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