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Newport Beach

Foodborne Illness Reports Closed True Food For Days

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True Food Kitchen was closed from Aug. 28 to Aug. 30 while county health inspectors investigated “alleged foodborne illness,” the county’s Environmental Health website states.

“There are 7 total confirmed cases,” said Denise Fennessy, director of Environmental Health at the county’s Health Care Agency. The victims ate at the restaurant between Aug. 21 and 25, she said, and “the ill persons in this specific outbreak had all reported to have eaten at True Foods.”

“The investigation is ongoing,” she said.

The victims all tested positive for shigella, a bacteria that triggers diarrhea.

A company spokeswoman said in an email that only one case of shigella had been definitely connected to the restaurant, and that they were working with county health officials.

“The health and safety of our guests and employees are our first priority,” said Anita Walker, vice president of marketing for Fox Restaurant Concepts, the parent company of True Food. “Immediately upon hearing from the Orange County Health Department a week ago that a single confirmed case and possibly two other unconfirmed cases of shigella may be connected to our restaurant, we closed our restaurant and took immediate safety measures, including all those recommended by the Orange County Health Department.”

All open wine, spirits or other beverages and food items were thrown away, and all ice and unsealed linens were removed, she said. The restaurant also underwent a thorough sanitizing cleaning by third-party crews that took more than 14 hours, she said, and new staff from outside the county were called in to operate the restaurant until medical tests cleared the local staff. The county health department conducted another inspection, and the management required all staff to undergo refresher training for safety and sanitation.

“All of these steps were designed to ensure the safety of our restaurant and make us ever more vigilant about food safety,” she said. “We were able to react quickly and open again because we plan and practice for contingencies like this because any public setting where people gather can contribute to the spread of illness these days, including us, and our guests and employees health and welfare remain our top priority.”

Employees who have returned to work were cleared by the health department, and others are still being screened, she said.

“We have allowed the Health Department complete access to our restaurant and our staff and will continue to work with them while they finalize their scientific investigation,” Walker said.

Any customer with questions or concerns can call (844) 570-5555, she added.

SOURCE: <http://www.coronadeltoday.com/45118/home/foodborne-illness-reports-closed-true-food-for-days/>