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True Food Kitchen at Fashion Island was shut for two days as county investigates shigella outbreak.

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True Food Kitchen in Fashion Island is working with replacement staff as the county investigates an infectious bacteria outbreak that sickened at least six customers.

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An upscale restaurant at Fashion Island that bills itself as a healthy living establishment is at the center of a suspected foodborne illness outbreak involving at least six victims, county officials said Thursday.

The sickened diners tested positive for shigella, an intestinal bacteria that triggers severe diarrhea. The "common factor" for each victim was they ate a meal at True Food Kitchen in Newport Beach on Aug. 21, 23, 24 and 25, county health officials said.

The county shut the restaurant Aug. 28 to investigate the outbreak. None of the victims ate the same dish, leading investigators to believe that the bacteria was spread "person to person," said Denise Fennessy, director of Environmental Health at the county's Health Care Agency.

"There was no common food item to focus on," she said.

Though the case is still under investigation, True Food was allowed to reopen Saturday night after meeting certain criteria, including sanitizing the entire restaurant and bringing in replacement staff, Fennessy said.

Anita Walker, vice president of marketing for parent company [Fox Restaurant Concepts](#) in Arizona, said the "health and safety of our guests and employees are our first priority."

True Food, which opened in 2010 at Fashion Island, has been working with the health agency since last week "to ensure the safety of our restaurant and make us ever more vigilant about food safety," Walker said in a statement Thursday.

During its two-day closure, True Food had to clean and sanitize the restaurant and dispose of all ready-to-eat foods. Walker said the cleanup included disposing of all food items including all open wine, spirits or other beverages, the removal of any unsealed linens and a thorough

sanitation of the restaurant.

All employees had to be tested and cleared before returning to work. Because those test results are still pending, Fennessy said True Food chose to bring in replacement staff from other restaurants.

Walker confirmed employees from True Food restaurants in Santa Monica and San Diego are working in Newport Beach until their employees are cleared to return to work.

Walker said any customer who might have concerns or questions can call 844-570-5555.

The first True Food Kitchen opened in 2008 in Phoenix – a unique dining concept conceived by [Fox Restaurant Concepts](#) and wellness guru [Dr. Andrew Weil](#), who is known for his anti-inflammatory diet. Though it is not a vegetarian restaurant, True Food's menu showcases plant-based dishes.

SOURCE: <http://www.ocregister.com/articles/food-633877-restaurant-true.html>