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Salmonella cases jump to 60

Investigation, testing continues

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The number of cases of salmonella exposure has now tripled. More than 60 people have been identified with gastrointestinal illness in connection with Supermercado Los Corrales grocery store, 3933 52nd St., according to the Kenosha County Division of Health. Salmonella, with a matching DNA fingerprint, has been found in two cases, with testing ongoing. While the source of the outbreak is still under investigation, the grocery store is the focus of the probe. "We're investigating, so we are really trying to give the state the most accurate numbers, but it is still so fluid at this point," said Gwynn Perry-Brye, clinical services director for the Kenosha County Division of Health.

Family becomes ill

Kenosha resident Diana Koeppel said her son-in-law and 3-year-old grandson started getting stomach problems May 11 after a buying pre-cooked carnitas and rice at the store on Mother's Day. The rest of the family didn't have any of the suspected pork. "They eventually went to the emergency room," Koeppel said. "My daughter was taking care of both of them and kept her two older girls away." The family's leftover food and stool samples were taken for testing. The hardest part for Koeppel was trying to get the youngest of the sick through it. "At 3, he didn't understand. He just cried and said, 'Mommy no,'" Koeppel said. "I just started crying. The baby could die from it. I was very concerned about it." Koeppel said he's doing better. "My grandson just had his first meal yesterday. Before that he could barely stomach the liquids," Koeppel said. Perry-Brye said those who are sick should not return to close quarters with others until they are symptom-free for 48 hours. The illness is life-threatening for the very old, the very young and those with compromised immune systems.

Testing results sought

Perry-Brye said not all the 60 have been tested yet as many come from the same families. "If all of the family is sick, we make sure we have one or two samples," Perry-Brye said. The testing not only identifies the correct pathogen but also labels a sub-species which may help doctors come up with the right drugs for treatment. Perry-Brye said test results on the food could take another week. The meat and food preparation area of Supermercado Los Corrales is temporarily closed while the investigation is ongoing, but the remainder of the establishment is open and unaffected by the investigation.

Tips for preventing salmonella

- Wash hands with soap before and after food preparation, and before eating.
- Wash kitchen work surfaces and utensils with soap and water immediately after they have been in contact with raw meat or poultry to prevent cross contamination with other foods.
- Always treat raw eggs, poultry, beef and pork as if they are contaminated and handle accordingly.

For more information contact the Kenosha County Division of Health at 605- 6700, 800-472-8008, or visit www.kenoshacounty.org.

SOURCE: http://www.kenoshanews.com/news/salmonella_cases_jump_to_60_482744485.html