



The Crab Pot Foodborne illness outbreak investigation

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Public Health investigated an outbreak of gastroenteritis with nausea, vomiting and diarrhea associated with The Crab Pot restaurant located at 1301 Alaskan Way, Seattle. Five people from the same meal party became ill after eating at the restaurant on 3/4/2017. We do not have laboratory confirmation of the etiology, but symptoms are suggestive of norovirus. Often in norovirus outbreaks no laboratory testing is done.

Public Health learned of the outbreak late on Monday 3/6/17. No additional reports have been received. As part of the Public Health investigation, Environmental Health inspectors visited the restaurant on both 3/8/17 and 3/9/17. The restaurant worked cooperatively with Public Health, and we discussed norovirus control measures with the person in charge. During the field inspection, we identified a violation related to improper handwashing facilities which is a risk factor for spreading norovirus. No ill food workers have been identified and the restaurant completed appropriate cleaning and disinfection of the facility. A follow-up visit will occur within 14 days to ensure all violations have been corrected.

About norovirus

Norovirus is a highly contagious virus that is frequently spread person-to-person and is often associated with food. Norovirus illness often has a sudden onset of nausea and vomiting and/or watery diarrhea with cramps. A low grade fever, chills, and body aches sometimes occur. Norovirus rarely causes severe complications. Dehydration is the most common complication, particularly among young children and the elderly. No vaccine is available for norovirus.

To prevent norovirus infection:

1. Because raw seafood can be contaminated with norovirus, always cook shellfish and other seafood thoroughly before eating.
2. Wash cutting boards and counters used for shellfish preparation immediately after use to avoid cross contaminating other foods.
3. Wash hands thoroughly with soap after using the bathroom or changing diapers, and before preparing any food or eating.
4. Wait at least 48 hours after the last episode of vomiting and/or diarrhea before preparing any food for others.

For more information on norovirus, see:

1. [Norovirus facts, Public Health – Seattle & King County](#)
2. [Norovirus facts, Foodsafety.gov](#)

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