

Bad news: 542 sickened in restaurant norovirus outbreak. Good news: Reports have stopped

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The Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department reported Thursday (Jan. 18) it has stopped receiving illness reports in connection to a norovirus outbreak linked to two El Toro restaurants.

The health department released a tally Thursday of those sickened after eating at the restaurants: 520 reported becoming ill [after eating at the Westgate neighborhood El Toro in Tacoma](#) and 22 reported illness [following dining at the University Place El Toro](#). That's up from the last report, released Jan. 12, of 423 at the Tacoma El Toro and 11 at the University Place location.

The health department closed the restaurants for about a day each last week as the restaurants deep cleaned and sanitized.

As a precaution, [El Toro sanitized its other three locations in Puyallup, Parkland and Lakewood](#).

Illness reports began trickling in Jan. 5 with the volume of reporting increasing Jan. 8-11 as media coverage increased of the restaurant closures.

Health department officials said the outbreak was one of the larger it has seen. "This is a large number of cases for us, but we know cases of norovirus typically go unreported. And likely, the high number reflects secondary cases — people who became ill from eating at the restaurant, then went home and infected family members," the health department wrote in a news release.

"Norovirus outbreaks typically have greater numbers of cases than other types of outbreaks because of the low number of virus particles needed to cause infection and the rapid person-to-person transmission."

News media reporting on the outbreak also might have driven the number of reports higher, the department said.

"We shared more about this outbreak than others in the past," according to the news release. "Media coverage and our own public outreach through our blog and social media expanded awareness of the outbreak and how to report foodborne illness."

SOURCE: <http://www.thenewstribune.com/entertainment/restaurants/tnt-diner/article195476259.html>