

Montgomery County Office of Public Health ties 10 hepatitis A cases back to restaurant

Officials say three deaths are linked to this outbreak.

By [Jaclyn Lee](#) and [6abc Digital Staff](#)

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY, Pennsylvania (WPVI) -- The Montgomery County Office of Public Health announced Friday that 10 confirmed hepatitis A cases can be tied back to Gino's Ristorante and Pizzeria in West Norriton.

Gino's was closed on January 7.

On Friday, the owners of Gino's allege the health department hadn't been able to identify the source of the outbreak, forcing their restaurant to close without sharing any evidence and hurting their reputation.

"There is nothing linked to us or the restaurant or the food that Hepatitis A exists," said Giacomo Badalamenti, co-owner of Gino's. "Our staff has been tested and vaccinated. All tests have come back negative. Our families also tested negative, so there is nothing in our restaurant that hepatitis A exists."

Action News contacted the Montgomery County health department and asked how they connected the outbreak to the restaurant.

A spokesperson said, "No source has been determined at this time. Through our investigation, we are able to identify hepatitis A was at the facility during late November. But we are not able to confirm if it was an ill food worker or a contaminated food product."

The owners wish that more information would have been shared with them during this process.

"It's a sad situation all the way around, and we also want answers for public safety, our families, our staff, their families, and everyone that comes and enters at our restaurant," said Badalamenti.

The health department conducted an inspection Thursday and gave Gino's the green light to reopen.

A total of 13 hepatitis A cases are under investigation, officials said. They say 10 are confirmed, and three remain suspect.

Of the 10 confirmed cases, seven people in were the hospital at one point in time, but none currently remain hospitalized.

Three deaths are linked to this outbreak.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health provided this information on hepatitis A:

"Hepatitis A is a highly contagious, vaccine-preventable, liver infection caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV) ranging in severity from mild infection lasting a few weeks to severe disease lasting several months. Hepatitis A usually spreads when a person unknowingly ingests the virus from objects, food, or drinks contaminated by small, undetected amounts of stool from an infected person. Hepatitis A can also spread from close personal contact with an infected person such as through sex or caring for someone who is ill."

Source: [Montgomery County Office of Public Health ties 10 hepatitis A cases back to Gino's Ristorante and Pizzeria in West Norriton - 6abc Philadelphia](#)