

Norovirus-like illness associated with IHOP in Seattle

AT-A-GLANCE

- **Cases:** 5
- **Hospitalizations:** 0
- **Deaths:** 0
- **Status:** Investigation is in progress
- **Location:** IHOP #1755, 10002 Aurora Ave N #2-24, Seattle, WA 98101
- **Meal date:** April 28, 2022
- **Prior food safety inspections and current rating?**
 - GOOD

Highlights

Updated May 6, 2022

Summary

Public Health is investigating an outbreak of norovirus-like illness associated with vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and chills at IHOP #1755 in Seattle.

Illnesses

Since April 29, 2022, 5 people from 1 meal party reported becoming ill after eating food from IHOP on April 28, 2022. We have not identified any ill employees.

Public Health actions

Environmental Health Investigators visited the restaurant on May 4th, 2022. Investigators identified improper handwashing which is a risk factor known to contribute to the spread of norovirus-like illness. The restaurant closed on May 4, 2022, to complete a thorough cleaning and disinfection.

Environmental Health Investigators revisited the restaurant on May 5th and confirmed proper cleaning and disinfection was completed. The restaurant was reopened on May 5, 2022.

Investigators reviewed with restaurant management the requirement that ill staff are not allowed to work until they are symptom-free for at least 48 hours and provided education about preventing the spread of norovirus — including proper handwashing and preventing bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods.

Laboratory testing

We do not have laboratory testing for the people who got sick. Often in norovirus outbreaks, no laboratory testing is done because people tend to get better within a day or two. Symptoms among those who got sick are suggestive of norovirus-like illness.

About norovirus

- Norovirus is a highly contagious virus that frequently spreads 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.

Prevention

General advice for reducing risk of contracting norovirus:

- Wash hands, cutting boards, and counters used for food preparation immediately after use to avoid cross-contamination of other foods.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap after using the bathroom or changing diapers, and before preparing any food or eating.
- Wait at least 48 hours after the last episode of vomiting and/or diarrhea before preparing any food for others.

More information about norovirus:

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

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