

Salmonella outbreak associated with Chili's South Indian Cuisine in Seattle

AT-A-GLANCE

- **Cases:** 3
- **Hospitalizations:** 0
- **Deaths:** 0
- **Status:** Investigation is in progress
- **Location:** Chili's South Indian Cuisine, 4220 University Way NE, Seattle, WA 98105
- **Meal dates:** September 17 and 23, 2022
- **Prior food safety inspections and current rating?**
 - EXCELLENT

Highlights

Updated October 21, 2022

Summary

Public Health is investigating an outbreak of salmonellosis (caused by *Salmonella* bacteria) associated with Chili's South Indian Cuisine in Seattle. The investigation is ongoing. At this time, we have not identified how *Salmonella* was spread within the restaurant. This is not uncommon because *Salmonella* can spread through contaminated food items, environmental surfaces, and from person to person.

Illnesses

Since October 6, 2022, three people from two separate meal parties reported becoming ill after consuming food from Chili's South Indian Cuisine in Seattle on September 17, 2022 and September 23, 2022. All the people developed one or more symptoms consistent with salmonellosis, including diarrhea, abdominal cramping, nausea, and vomiting. We have not identified any ill employees.

Public Health actions

Public Health conducted interviews with the people ill with salmonellosis to identify potential common exposures and found that they all became ill after eating food from Chili's South Indian Cuisine.

Environmental Health Investigators visited the restaurant on October 19, 2022. Investigators identified sanitizing issues, potential cross contamination, inadequate hand washing, and lack of proper access to handwashing stations. Corrective actions were taken during the inspection. Environmental Health Investigators will revisit the facility within 2 weeks to ensure proper compliance with food handling practices.

No ill employees were identified at the time of inspection. Investigators reviewed with restaurant management the requirement that ill staff are not allowed to work until they

are symptom-free. Investigators provided education about preventing the spread of *Salmonella* – including preventing cross contamination, proper cooling methods, sanitizing procedures and handwashing.

Laboratory testing

Two of the cases have confirmatory testing indicating infections with *Salmonella* via culture. Both cases have the same strain of *Salmonella*, based on genetic fingerprinting (whole genome sequencing or WGS) at the Washington State Public Health Laboratory. The third case did not have confirmatory testing but had symptoms consistent with Salmonellosis and is epidemiologically linked.