

Gastrointestinal illness outbreak associated with Zobel Ethiopian Cuisine

Cases	2
Hospitalizations	0
Deaths	0
Status	Investigation is completed
Location	1219 E. Jefferson St., Seattle, WA 98122
Illness Onset Date Range	March 4, 2024
Meal Date Range	March 3, 2024
Current Inspection Rating	OKAY

Highlights, posted March 13, 2024

Summary

Public Health investigated an outbreak of gastrointestinal illness associated with Zobel Ethiopian Cuisine in Seattle. Symptoms and timing of illness onsets were suggestive of a bacterial toxin, such as [*Clostridium perfringens*](#) or [*Bacillus cereus*](#).

The exact food ingredient or drink that caused the illnesses was not identified, though this is not uncommon for outbreaks associated with a bacterial toxin.

Illnesses

Two people from two separate households reported becoming sick on March 4, 2024. They each had one or more symptoms consistent with a bacterial toxin, including nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramping, chills, and body aches. We did not identify any ill employees.

Public Health actions

Public Health conducted interviews with the people who became sick to identify potential common exposures and identified that they both became sick after eating at Zobel Ethiopian Cuisine.

Environmental Health investigators visited Zobel Ethiopian Cuisine restaurant on March 11, 2024. Investigators identified potential risk factors for bacterial toxin growth including improper cooling of food and inadequate refrigeration. Corrective actions were implemented at the time of the visit, and investigators provided education on proper cooling procedures for cooked foods.

Laboratory testing

We do not have laboratory testing for the people who got sick. Bacterial toxin illnesses are typically short-lived and by the time people seek care, if they do at all, it is often too long after the suspected exposure to test.