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Gallatin City-County Health Department, DPHHS Continue to Investigate Foodborne Outbreak

The Gallatin City-County Health Department, the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS), other local health departments, and federal agencies continue to investigate the foodborne illness outbreak linked to eating food at Dave's Sushi in Bozeman.

The investigational activities are ongoing, and DPHHS and the Gallatin City-County Health Department acknowledge that the investigation may not be able to identify a specific pathogen as the source of this outbreak. This outbreak appears to be isolated to people who ate at Dave's Sushi between March 31 and April 17, 2023. The restaurant remains closed, and there does not appear to be any further risk to the public.

DPHHS recommends that individuals who experienced illness after eating at Dave's Sushi in late March and April 2023 call and report their symptoms to their local health department so cases can be tracked as part of this outbreak investigation. Contact information for all [local health departments is here](#).

“DPHHS supports the Gallatin City-County Health Department with this investigation by coordinating with other local county health departments across the state who have reported illnesses associated with this outbreak. DPHHS is also working closely with federal partners assisting with this investigation, including the Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention and Food and Drug Administration,” said DPHHS epidemiologist Rachel Hinnenkamp of the Communicable Disease and Epidemiology Section.

To date, the investigation has identified at least 30 individuals associated with this outbreak who ate at the restaurant between March 31 and April 17, 2023. Three individuals had severe outcomes, including hospitalizations, and the deaths of two individuals are being investigated after eating at the restaurant.

The manner and cause of death for these two individuals will remain pending until autopsy and toxicology results are available. The pattern of illness identified through case investigation, to date, indicates individuals became sick within 30 minutes to 4.5 hours after their meal. Preliminary investigative findings indicate that food containing morel mushrooms may be the exposure of concern. Currently, no pathogen/toxin has been identified, and both state and federal partners continue to test clinical and food samples.

The DPHHS investigation has determined that the morel mushrooms served at the restaurant were not distributed to any other restaurants or businesses in Montana. The mushrooms were cultivated in China, shipped to a distributor in California, and subsequently sent to multiple states. There are no known associated illnesses in other states identified at this time.

“We remain dedicated to working together with our state partners to investigate the potential pathogen or cause of this foodborne illness outbreak. Our collective efforts in this investigation will continue to be thorough and extensive. We are deeply saddened and extend our sincerest condolences to all the families and friends of the two deceased, as well as all those affected by this outbreak,” stated Lori Christenson, Health Officer for the Gallatin City-County Health Department.

Public health departments, like the Gallatin City-County Health Department, regularly investigate reports of foodborne illness to protect the public’s health. These investigations are a multi-faceted, multi-disciplinary undertaking that involve collecting and analyzing data from a variety of sources, such as clinical and food samples. Health departments across Montana conduct regular inspections of licensed establishments, like restaurants, to evaluate compliance with food safety standards and the effectiveness of the establishments’ food safety management systems.

Health officials say that anyone can get sick from eating contaminated food. The CDC estimates that each year in the United States 48 million people get sick from foodborne illnesses, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die. Additionally, certain groups are more likely to get sick and have a more serious illness. These groups include adults over the age of 65, children younger than 5 years, people with weakened immune systems, and those that are pregnant. It is recommended to take proper precautions – clean, separate, cook, and chill – when preparing food. Montanans can [find more information here.](#)