

# Gastrointestinal illness outbreak associated with Tacos El Guero in Kirkland

|                                                   |                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Cases                                             | 34                                              |
| Hospitalizations                                  | 0                                               |
| Deaths                                            | 0                                               |
| Status                                            | Investigation is in progress                    |
| Location                                          | 14130 Juanita Dr Ne #101,<br>Kirkland, WA 98034 |
| Illness onset date range                          | September 14 and 15, 2023                       |
| Meal dates                                        | September 14, 2023                              |
| Prior food safety inspections and current rating? | NEEDS IMPROVEMENT                               |

## Highlights, posted September 19, 2023

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### Summary

Public Health is investigating an outbreak of gastrointestinal illness associated with a private event catered by a Tacos El Guero food truck on September 14, 2023. Symptoms and timing of illness onsets were suggestive of a bacterial toxin, such as [Clostridium perfringens](#) or [Bacillus cereus](#).

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

## Illnesses

Public Health identified 34 sick people that developed one or more symptoms consistent with bacterial toxin, including diarrhea, abdominal cramping, and nausea. Illness onset dates ranged from September 14, 2023, to September 15, 2023.

## Public Health actions

On September 15, 2023, a group reported the outbreak to Public Health after eating together on September 14, 2023. Public Health gathered information about symptoms and when people became ill.

Environmental Health investigators visited the mobile food trucks and restaurant on September 18, 2023. Investigators identified potential risk factors for bacterial toxin growth including inadequate refrigeration and improper cooling of food. We also observed inadequate equipment improper reheating, and lack of managerial oversight. Additionally, food at this event was served out of an unpermitted food truck. Corrective actions were discussed at the time of the visit. Based on unsafe food handling practices identified during the investigation, environmental health investigators closed the restaurant on September 18, 2023. Environmental Health investigators will revisit the facility to ensure adoption of safe food handling practices prior to allowing the restaurant to reopen.

## 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.

[Gastrointestinal illness outbreak associated with Tacos El Guero in Kirkland - King County, Washington](#)