

Salmonella outbreak associated with IHOP in Bellevue

Cases	3
Hospitalizations	2
Deaths	0
Status	Investigation is completed
Location	14747 NE 20th St, Bellevue, WA 98007
Illness Onset Date Range	October 23, 2023 – December 23, 2023
Meal Date Range	October 16, 2023 – December 21, 2023
Current Inspection Rating	EXCELLENT

Highlights, posted February 1, 2024

Summary

Public Health investigated an outbreak of salmonellosis (caused by *Salmonella* bacteria) associated with IHOP in Bellevue. The people who became sick reported eating a wide variety of breakfast foods at IHOP.

Illnesses

Three people from three separate households reported becoming sick. The people who became sick ranged in age from 20 to 70 years old. All three people developed one or more symptoms consistent with salmonellosis, including nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, diarrhea, bloody stool, and fever. 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 all became sick after eating at IHOP in Bellevue. No specific food was identified.

Environmental Health Investigators requested source information and food receipts from the restaurants on January 11, 2024. Investigators visited the restaurant on January 16, 2024. Investigators reviewed the restaurant's food preparation processes and did not identify factors that may have contributed to the outbreak. The facility conducted a thorough deep cleaning and reinforced food safety training with staff.

Laboratory testing

All three cases had testing that identified *Salmonella* infections via culture. Further testing found all three cases had the same strain of *Salmonella* based on genetic fingerprinting (whole genome sequencing or WGS) at the Washington State Public Health Laboratory.

About *Salmonella*

Salmonellosis is a bacterial infection that is often spread through the fecal-oral route, through contaminated food and water, or through contact with animals and their environments. Symptoms of salmonellosis include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, fever, chills, and abdominal cramping. Illness typically lasts several days, and people can spread infection to others even after symptoms resolve.

Sick people with a suspected *Salmonella* infection should not work in food handling, patient care, or childcare while having vomiting or diarrhea.

To prevent *Salmonella* infection:

- Wash hands with soap and water after going to the bathroom, changing diapers, touching animals, and before eating or preparing food.
- Cook all meats thoroughly, especially poultry.
- Wash cutting boards and counters used for meat or poultry preparation immediately after use to avoid cross contaminating other foods.