

Fayetteville E. coli outbreak appears to have passed peak, health department declares

by [Doug Thompson](#) | September 1, 2023 at 2:50 a.m.

FAYETTEVILLE -- No new cases reporting symptoms of E. coli have come in since Aug. 25, indicating the outbreak in Northwest Arkansas is past its peak, the University of Arkansas and the Arkansas Department of Health said in a statement Thursday. The Health Department confirmed in the update with the university that 42 people have been identified as part of the outbreak out of more than 3,200 surveyed. Of that number, 37 are probable cases based on reported E. coli symptoms while five cases have been confirmed with positive tests. The number of people impacted may change as the department continues to investigate. Original estimates of the number of people who may have been affected were reduced after those with similar symptoms but no link to the outbreak were sorted out from those with true E. coli symptoms. The department also revised its case count of those hospitalized, confirming that a total of four people were hospitalized during the outbreak. Two of them remain hospitalized while two have been discharged. A previous hospitalization has been ruled out by the department as being part of the outbreak. The department's investigation does not point to a specific food source at this time as investigators await food sample test results. The department has no reason to believe the outbreak is connected to the university's public dining facilities, the statement says.

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Based on what is known about the onset of E. coli-related symptoms, the outbreak appears to have started approximately two weeks ago. Symptoms usually start three to four days after ingesting the bacteria.

Because the bacteria is also transmissible, it is important to practice proper hygiene, especially good handwashing, at all times, on and off campus, officials have said. The university has increased its surface cleaning and sanitizing protocols to help mitigate the spread.

Visit health.uark.edu/ecoli.php for updates.

SOURCE: Northwest Arkansas Democrat Gazette, Sept. 1, 2023, [Fayetteville E. coli outbreak appears to have passed peak, health department declares \(nwaonline.com\)](#)