

Gastrointestinal illness associated with Coho Cafe in Issaquah

Cases	6
Hospitalizations	0
Deaths	0
Status	Investigation in completed
Location	6130 E Lake Sammamish Pkwy SE A, Issaquah, WA 98029
Meal date range	March 11, 2024 – April 5, 2024
Illness onset date range:	March 12, 2024 – April 6, 2024
Current Inspection Rating	GOOD

Highlights, posted May 15, 2024

Summary

Public Health investigated an outbreak of gastrointestinal illness associated with Coho Cafe in Issaquah. We did not find a specific food or drink item that might have caused the illnesses.

This outbreak appears to be over.

Illnesses

Since March 15, 2024, six people have reported becoming sick after eating food at Coho Cafe between March 11 – April 5, 2024. Everyone developed one or more symptoms of a gastrointestinal illness, including vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and chills.

We did not identify any sick staff at the restaurant.

Public Health actions

After the initial reports of illness, Environmental Health Investigators visited the restaurant on March 27, 2024. We directed restaurant management to do a thorough cleaning and disinfection because we suspected norovirus, a very common cause of gastrointestinal illness.

We reviewed their practice for letting staff return to work after they are sick with gastrointestinal illness. Staff must wait at least 24 hours after symptoms stop before returning to work. When the illness might be norovirus, staff must wait at least 48 hours after symptoms stop before returning to work.

During our visit, we observed an employee putting on gloves before washing their hands, a potential risk factor for spreading illness. We had the employee wash their hands and discussed proper hand washing with staff. We also provided further education about preventing the spread of norovirus. Prevention measures include proper handwashing, preventing bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods, and appropriate cleaning and disinfection.

We revisited the restaurant on April 10, 2024, and found they had done appropriate cleaning and disinfection with correct handwashing practices in place.

When we received another report of sick people after that, Environmental Health Investigators visited the restaurant again on April 24, 2024. All staff at the restaurant were interviewed about symptoms of illness. We also required all remaining staff confirm to management that they were not sick before starting their next shift. We directed them to conduct a second round of deep cleaning and disinfection and helped update their staff illness policy to meet food code requirements.

Laboratory testing

We do not have laboratory testing for the people who got sick, which is not unusual for illnesses like this. Symptoms among those who got sick are like norovirus, but other causes could not be ruled out.