

Investigation into E. coli outbreak almost complete, St. Louis County health officials say

St. Louis County said Tuesday it is close to finishing its investigation into an E. coli outbreak tied to Rockwood school events and Andre's Banquets and Cateri

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ST. LOUIS COUNTY (First Alert 4) - St. Louis County said Tuesday it is close to finishing its investigation into an E. coli outbreak tied to Rockwood school events and Andre's Banquets and Catering.

County health officials say 115 cases are linked to the outbreak and 13 victims have been hospitalized. Two patients are still in the hospital. Genetic testing confirmed 25 cases were linked to Andre's, county officials say. Health officials added that the 25 cases represent the largest identified subcluster in the outbreak, which health officials say was national. Cases were reported in Kansas, Illinois, North Dakota, South Dakota, Ohio and Indiana. In all the states, exposure to leafy greens was a key factor.

Overall, health authorities say exposure to lettuce was a big factor across the country but the rates of people getting ill from the St. Louis area events are higher than in other places.

The St. Louis County Department of Public Health says that on November 13, they [learned](#) of the first three cases, which were connected to Rockwood Summit High School. According to the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, an unopened package of lettuce later collected from Andre's Banquet and Catering [tested negative](#) for E. Coli.

"The lettuce tested negative that the state had collected, but that was a closed box. It wasn't the same box that these people ate. So. it could still have been from the farm or anywhere during the processing or after that at the facility," Amanda Brzozowski, the Senior Epidemiologist at the St. Louis County Department of Public Health, said in late November.

The families of several victims are taking [legal action](#). Ed Rhode, a spokesman for Andre's, sent First Alert 4 the following statement Tuesday, saying in part that it was not fair to name Andre's before the lettuce was tested:

"Two weeks ago, state investigators reported lettuce taken from our facility tested negative for E Coli. Nearly a month after its investigation began, St Louis County health officials are still working to find the cause of our local outbreak. Today, they confirmed genetic sequencing of local cases has now connected the outbreak with cases in at least six other states. We have said all along that it was unfair to name Andre's before the lettuce was tested and before the investigation was complete. WSe look forward to St Louis County finishing its work and finding the source of our local outbreak."

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SOURCE: [Investigation into E. coli outbreak almost complete, St. Louis County health officials say](#)