

## Public health investigating restaurant after food poisoning reports

- [Tyler Wainfeld](#)
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The L.A. County Department of Public Health is investigating a Mexican restaurant in Valencia following multiple reports of food poisoning arising from dining at the restaurant late last week.

According to an email Wednesday from Public Health's media relations division, the department began receiving reports of "gastrointestinal symptoms" on Tuesday after people dined at Madre Oaxacan Restaurant & Mezcaleria.

"On Tuesday, Sept. 17, the Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division, received several reports of people experiencing gastrointestinal symptoms after consuming food at Madre Oaxacan Restaurant located at 27007 McBean Parkway, Valencia," reads a statement from Becky Schlikerman, director of external communications for Public Health. "The department's Outbreak Investigation and Evaluation Unit is investigating."

As part of the investigation, Public Health sent out a survey asking those who dined at the restaurant to fill it out to "determine the nature and extent of this incident." The survey can be found at [tinyurl.com/2p9zvahs](https://tinyurl.com/2p9zvahs) and any questions can be directed to the food safety unit at the acute communicable disease control division at 213-240-7941.

According to Patrick Moody, spokesman for Henry Mayo Newhall Hospital, an urgent care physician said there was a noticeable uptick on Friday and Saturday in the number of people reporting stomach pain. He said 14% of patients those two days were complaining of symptoms related to food poisoning, while the average is closer to 9%.

According to Ivan Vasquez, owner of the restaurant, representatives from Public Health were there on Wednesday to let him know that four cases of salmonella were linked to the restaurant. He closed the restaurant at 3 p.m. on Wednesday and it will reopen once the county gives him the OK.

"It's unfortunate that this happened at my establishment," Vasquez said in a phone interview Wednesday evening.

Public Health is dropping off salmonella test kits for employees to help determine how the bacteria entered the restaurant, according to Vasquez. He said an inspection occurred Wednesday for nearly six hours that showed all the food was safe and there were no unsanitary conditions at any of the facilities.

The restaurant will be sanitized to ensure the safety of customers, Vasquez said.

Vasquez has other locations in West Hollywood, Torrance and Culver City, but he said there have been no reports of issues at any of them.

“We want to stop the spread, but it didn’t happen because the food was contaminated,” Vasquez said.

Santa Clarita resident James Williams said he went to the restaurant on Friday with his family. The next day, he, his wife and his father-in-law all said they were feeling symptoms of food poisoning.

After doing some digging on social media sites, he said he found they were not the only ones experiencing issues after eating at the restaurant.

“It seems like there were a bunch of people who ate there who were getting sick that night or the next day,” Williams said in a phone interview Wednesday.

Dana, a Santa Clarita resident who asked to be identified by only her first name, said she, her girlfriend and her sister were at the restaurant on Friday, and by Saturday, all three were sick.

“My sister got symptoms early the next day, then I got sick, but not as bad,” Dana said in a phone interview Wednesday, adding that her girlfriend had a fever of 103 on Tuesday.

All three went to a private urgent care facility, she said.

Both Dana and Williams said their families had stool samples taken to see if a root cause of the symptoms can be found.

Williams said his wife is still waiting for her results after sending a sample on Monday.

According to Williams, the owner responded to his online review and asked for more information about his experience, but also said the restaurant is conducting an internal investigation. The owner told Williams that he is alerting the restaurant’s food suppliers to see if there have been any product recalls or other restaurants reporting food poisoning.

Public Health last inspected the restaurant in March and gave it a score of 92, earning it an “A” rating, though with a couple of violations.

The report stated that pico de gallo, queso fresco, tamales and chile relleno were observed being stored in an inoperable cooler and were measured as being above the approved temperature of 41 degrees. Shellfish was also observed to be maintained in an unsafe manner.

None of the outstanding violations were observed in a follow-up inspection in April.

SOURCE: [Public health investigating restaurant after food poisoning reports \(signalscv.com\)](https://signalscv.com/public-health-investigating-restaurant-after-food-poisoning-reports)