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Salmonella outbreak linked to Batavia restaurant

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For The Beacon-News

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BATAVIA — The Kane County Health Department has confirmed it is conducting a food-borne illness investigation at Aliano's Ristorante, a downtown Batavia Italian restaurant that opened a year ago.

Tom Schlueter, health communications coordinator for the Health Department, said Tuesday there have been six cases of salmonella with common links that go back to Aliano's, at 90 N. Island Ave. in Batavia.

"They all have common links back to the restaurant," Schlueter said.

Schlueter said the investigation began Friday.

"One case was hospitalized and has since been released. The others did not require hospitalization," he said.

Schlueter said the cases were not all from the same dining party and they were not reported on the same day.

Two brothers, Mario and Phil Aliano, opened the eatery in the River Square Shopping Center between Wilson and Houston streets in the fall of 2011. The restaurant, known for its pasta dishes and pizza, recently expanded to offer outdoor seating for patrons.

A cardboard pizza plate for carry-out boxes was taped to the door on Tuesday with a message for patrons, apologizing for the inconvenience of being closed and that they will reopen in a couple of days. No one answered the door or the telephone, but people were seen entering the restaurant Tuesday.

Schlueter said the restaurant voluntarily closed and has been cooperating with the health department investigation. He said employees are undergoing testing, which is standard procedure. Employees have to test negative and the testing must be 48 hours apart, he said.

Tracking down the potential source of a salmonella outbreak can sometimes be difficult. "Sometimes you never know the exact source," Schlueter said.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, most people infected with salmonella develop diarrhea, fever and abdominal cramps 12 to 72 hours after infection. The illness usually lasts 4 to 7 days, and most people recover without treatment. However in some cases, the diarrhea may be so severe that the patient needs to be hospitalized.

The Kane County Health Department looks into the foods the patrons had eaten at the restaurant, if they had dined in any other location and the date that they had dined there.

Schlueter said there were 108 cases of salmonella in the county in 2011 and 85 cases in 2010. He said this year there have been 66 reports of salmonella.

Schlueter said the restaurant will not reopen until it is safe for people to return.

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