

Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) associated with multiple Homegrown restaurants

AT-A-GLANCE

- **Cases:** 4
- **Hospitalizations:** 0
- **Deaths:** 0
- **Status:** Investigation is ongoing
- **Location:** Homegrown restaurants ([Redmond](#), [Kirkland](#), and [Seattle on Westlake Ave.](#))
- **Event date:** April 24–26, 2018
- **Prior food safety inspections and current rating?**
 - Redmond: [EXCELLENT](#)
 - Kirkland: [GOOD](#)
 - Seattle (Westlake Ave): [GOOD](#)

Highlights

Updated May 25, 2018

Summary

Public Health is investigating an outbreak of Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) associated with multiple Homegrown restaurants.

Illnesses

Since May 23, 2018, we have learned that four persons (one is a Snohomish County resident) have tested positive for STEC after consuming food from three different Homegrown restaurants in King County. Symptoms included abdominal cramps and diarrhea, with one person reporting bloody diarrhea.

All four ate the chicken pesto sandwich from one of the following locations: Redmond, Kirkland or Seattle (Westlake Ave). Of the four ill persons, three are adults and one is a child. Illness onsets occurred during April 24–May 6, 2018. Exact meal dates are not known for all four persons, but known meal dates occurred during April 24–26, 2018.

Public Health actions

On May 24, 2018, Environmental Health investigators visited the three Homegrown locations where the ill persons reported eating. During the field inspections, potential risk factors, including handwashing facilities violations at two of the three locations, and a cold holding temperature violation at one of the three locations, were identified and discussed with the restaurant managers.

We are also investigating the various ingredients of the chicken pesto sandwich. All Homegrown locations in King County have stopped selling this particular sandwich while the investigation is ongoing. Any remaining products related to this sandwich have been put on hold in case testing is warranted. The three restaurants were required to

complete a thorough cleaning and disinfection. Investigators also reviewed the requirement that staff are not allowed to work while ill with vomiting or diarrhea.

Investigators revisited the restaurants on May 25, 2018, to confirm cleaning and disinfection were completed appropriately. We are currently investigating whether any employees had a recent diarrheal illness. We will post updates once we have further details.

Laboratory testing

Three of the four persons who got sick tested positive for STEC O26. All three had the same genetic fingerprint, suggesting that they have a common source of infection; genetic fingerprinting for the other ill person cannot be completed. This genetic fingerprint has never been seen in the United States before, making it unique to this outbreak.

Public Health messages

At this time, there is no indication of ongoing illness.

Persons who have eaten at Homegrown and developed diarrhea within 10 days, and anyone who develops bloody diarrhea, should consult with their healthcare provider to determine if testing is necessary.