

**Outbreak of Gastroenteritis Associated with Jazz A Louisiana Kitchen Restaurant  
Wyandotte County, October 2009**



## **Background**

On October 26, 2009, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment-Bureau of Surveillance and Epidemiology (KDHE-BSE) was notified of a possible outbreak of gastrointestinal illness among individuals who ate a meal from Jazz A Louisiana Kitchen Restaurant, 1859 Village West Pkwy #102, Kansas City, KS, 66111. The initial complaint indicated that five people from two different households became ill after eating food from the restaurant. In response to this complaint, an outbreak investigation was initiated by staff from KDHE-BSE, the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA), and the Wyandotte County Health Department (WCHD).

## **Key Findings**

Telephone interviews conducted by staff from WCHD revealed that three individuals were residents of Johnson County. WCHD notified Johnson County Health Department (JCHD) and requested assistance with interviewing the residents of Johnson County. Four individuals met the case definition of illness: onset of diarrhea (three or more loose stools within a 24-hour period) or vomiting after eating food at the Jazz A Louisiana Kitchen restaurant. Complete information on illness incubation was available for three individuals and duration of illness was not reported. A median incubation period of 20 hours was recorded. Duration of illness was not collected due to the time the interviews were conducted; ill individuals had not yet recovered.

Symptom information was collected for all four cases. Diarrhea and vomiting was reported by three (75%) of the cases; nausea, abdominal pain, chills was reported by two (50%) of the cases, and one (25%) case reported having a headache.

A three-day food history was collected for one individual, and the common meal information was obtained for all four individuals. All individuals reported eating the chicken fettuccine alfredo from the restaurant. No other common meals or food items were identified for these individuals. One stool specimen was collected on October 27<sup>th</sup> and tested positive for norovirus at the Kansas Health and Environmental Laboratory. The specimen was negative for *Salmonella*, *Shigella*, *Campylobacter*, and *E. coli* O157, and shiga toxin.

A food inspection of the establishment was conducted on October 26<sup>th</sup>. Many critical violations were observed during the inspection: (1) can opener blade had buildup of grease and dried food debris; (2) food was taken from the cooler and placed into the hot hold, then served to customers before being reheated to 165°F; (3) improper cooling temperatures of potential hazardous food; (4) proper hot holding temperature was not maintained for mashed potatoes; (5) proper cold holding temperatures was not maintained for make table contents; (6) missing proper date marking and disposition information for several items in the walk in cooler; and (7) observed live fruit flies (3-5) flying around the bar and above food prep areas. No employees of the establishment reported illness during the specified time frame of October 20 – October 30, 2009.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Four individuals from two different households became ill with diarrhea and vomiting after eating a meal at the Jazz A Louisiana Kitchen restaurant. Most likely this outbreak was caused by norovirus; however, the causative agent for this outbreak was not confirmed according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention criterion which requires two laboratory-confirmed cases to confirm a norovirus outbreak<sup>1</sup>.

Norovirus is a highly contagious pathogen that requires as few as 10 organisms to cause infection, and shedding of the virus has shown to occur prior to the onset of symptoms<sup>2</sup>. Transmitted primarily through the fecal-oral route, norovirus particles may be spread through direct contact or through consuming fecally-contaminated food or water. Spread via aerosolized vomitus is also possible. Historically, norovirus outbreaks have been associated with fecally-contaminated foods, especially ready-to-eat foods such as salads, sandwiches, ice, cookies, and fruit<sup>1</sup>. Humans are the only known reservoir of norovirus. Special care should be taken to avoid norovirus contamination of ready-to-eat foods. Individuals who are experiencing gastrointestinal illness should refrain from food handling and ensure proper hand hygiene at all times. Food handlers, in particular, should be educated on proper hand washing and discouraged from bare hand contact with such foods. Ill food handlers should be excluded from work while experiencing gastrointestinal symptoms.

Future outbreak investigations can be improved by collecting complete and accurate food histories from all ill individuals. Every attempt should also be made to obtain stool specimens from at least two ill individuals to confirm the causative agent.

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*Through education, direct services, and the assessment of data and trends, coupled with policy development and enforcement, KDHE will improve health and quality of life. We prevent injuries, illness, and foster a safe and sustainable environment for the people of Kansas.*

**References:**

- 1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Diagnosis and Management of Foodborne Illnesses: A Primer for Physicians and other Health Care Professionals." MMWR 2004;53(No. RR-4).
- 2 Goller JL, Dimitriadis A, Tan A, Kelly H, Marshall JA. 2004. J. Hosp. Infect. 58(4):286-91.