

**Outbreak of Gastroenteritis Associated with Buzzard's Pizza Restaurant —  
Franklin County, June 2009**



## **Background**

On June 22, 2009, the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) was notified of a possible outbreak of gastrointestinal illness among individuals who shared a meal from Buzzard's Pizza, 401 E Franklin, Pomona, KS, 66076. The preliminary complaint indicated that a party of 23 ate at noon, June 20, and 16 individuals later became ill with diarrhea and vomiting. In response to this report, an outbreak investigation was initiated by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) and the Franklin County Health Department (FCHD).

## **Key Findings**

The FCHD attempted to interview every individual within the dining party. Fifteen telephone interviews were conducted. Thirteen individuals met the case definition of illness: onset of diarrhea or vomiting after eating at Buzzard's Pizza on June 20. The median illness incubation period was 30 hours. Twelve (92%) reported experiencing diarrhea, and ten (77%) reported vomiting; some also experienced fever, chills, headache, and stomach pain. The median duration of illness was 57 hours. Two individuals did not become ill.

Food histories were collected from the 13 ill attendees and the two non-ill individuals. A variety of pizzas and soft drinks were consumed. While the restaurant offers salad, no attendees reported eating salad; however, many reported consuming ranch dressing. In addition, several ate birthday cake that was prepared outside of the restaurant. No specific food item was associated with illness.

Stool samples were collected from seven ill persons by FCHD, and tested at KDHE Laboratories. All were positive for norovirus by Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR), and negative for bacteria, parasites, and shiga toxin.

A food inspection of the establishment was conducted on June 24. No critical violations were observed.

Restaurant employees were surveyed for recent illness. No employees reported illness from June 17 to June 23.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Thirteen individuals became ill with diarrhea and/or vomiting after sharing a meal at Buzzard's Pizza. Norovirus was isolated from the seven individuals who submitted stool samples. Although these individuals reported no other common exposures, the illness cannot be conclusively linked to the shared restaurant meal. The source of the norovirus is not known.

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