

**Outbreak of Norovirus Associated with Blind Tiger Brewery and
Restaurant — Shawnee County, December 2015**



Background

On December 28, 2016, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), Infectious Disease Epidemiology and Response (IDER) was notified by the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) of three foodborne illness complaints reporting six individuals experiencing gastrointestinal symptoms following a common meal at the Blind Tiger Brewery and Restaurant in Topeka, KS on December 23, 2016. The Shawnee County Health Agency (SCHA) was notified on December 28 and, in conjunction with KDHE, began an outbreak investigation to determine the source of illness and to implement appropriate control measures. A standardized questionnaire was administered by phone to those reporting illness.

Key Investigation Findings

- Six out of 16 individuals among three households who dined together at Blind Tiger Brewery and Restaurant reported gastrointestinal illness. Of those reporting illness, all six met the case definition. A case was defined as an individual who ate at Blind Tiger Brewery and Restaurant on December 23, 2015 and developed diarrhea or vomiting within 72 hours.
- The most common symptoms were diarrhea and nausea (100%) followed by vomiting and abdominal cramps (83%).
- Onset of illness occurred on 12/25/2015 for all six cases. Incubation time ranged from 33.5 hour to 50 hours with a median of 36.5 hours.
- Ages of cases ranged from 10 – 47 years (median = 27.5); 5 (83%) were female.
- Three stool specimens were collected and tested at the Kansas Health and Environmental Laboratories. All three tested positive for norovirus genogroup II.
- The Kansas Department of Agriculture conducted an inspection of the restaurant on December 29, 2015. Six priority violations were found including cold holding violations, date marking violations, and improper chemical storage; all were corrected on site.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This was an outbreak of gastrointestinal illness associated with dining at the Blind Tiger Brewery and Restaurant. All ill individuals reported the same onset date and had no other commonalities in the week prior, indicating this was a point-source outbreak, but no specific food or drink item was implicated. KDA provided the restaurant with norovirus-specific cleaning and disinfection guidelines.

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