

For immediate release: May 17, 2023

Gallatin City-County Health Department Rescinds Closure Order and Institutes New Health Officer Order with Corrective Actions Required Prior to Dave's Sushi Reopening

Since being ordered to close on April 20, 2023, food samples – including salmon and morel mushrooms – from Dave's Sushi have been collected and analyzed. To date, all samples have come back negative for a series of pathogens and toxins. A thorough investigation led by the Gallatin City-County Health Department, with support from the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS), the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), is still ongoing and it is known that this investigation may not be able to identify a specific pathogen/toxin as a source of the outbreak that impacted 50 people. Three individuals had severe outcomes, including hospitalizations, and the deaths of two individuals are being investigated after eating at the restaurant. The manner and cause of death for these two individuals will remain pending until autopsy and toxicology results are available.

In addition to the initial investigation of persons who became ill, the Gallatin City-County Health Department and the Department of Public Health and Human Services in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are also conducting an epidemiologic study to compare the menu items eaten by persons who became ill to the menu items for persons who also ate at the restaurant during the same time period but did not become ill. The preliminary analysis strongly suggests that the morel mushrooms were the food item that caused the outbreak and that other menu items that did not contain morel mushrooms were not associated with persons becoming ill. Dave's Sushi has removed and discarded all morel mushrooms and other food inventory, and has corrected all violations from the April 18, 2023 inspection.

On May 17, 2023, the Gallatin City-County Health Officer determined that there is no longer an imminent health hazard preventing the establishment from reopening and rescinded the Closure Order and instituted a new Health Officer Order. This new order requires specific corrective actions that Dave's Sushi has to satisfy prior to the restaurant re-opening for food service to mitigate any future risks to public health. The corrective actions include providing the health department with specific standard operating procedures, including procedures for addressing biological toxins. Other actions include mandatory staff training for all food handlers and management staff; providing the names of the staff member(s) who have supervisory and management authority to the Health Department; successfully passing required inspections; and providing a fresh food inventory.

Once Dave's Sushi has completed all required corrective actions, it can reopen.



“Foodborne illness outbreaks are a serious public health concern. We remain committed to working with our state and federal partners on further investigational activities and remain deeply saddened for all those affected by this outbreak,” said Gallatin City-County Health Officer Lori Christenson. “The Health Department and Dave’s Sushi took prompt action to reduce the possibility of new illnesses by closing the restaurant during the detailed investigative work. A foodborne illness outbreak can be disruptive, frustrating, feel scary, and, most tragically, result in death or severe injury. With the findings from the preliminary analysis pointing towards the morel mushrooms and required actions Dave’s Sushi must take prior to reopening, there is no known public health reason for the establishment to stay closed.”

The public can find more information about food-borne illnesses [here](#).

