



Bill Richardson
Governor

**NEW MEXICO
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**

Office of the Secretary

Harold Runnels Building
1190 Saint Francis Drive (87505)
PO Box 26110, Santa Fe, NM 87502
Phone (505) 827-2855 Fax (505) 827-2836
www.nmenv.state.nm.us



Ron Curry
Secretary
Jon Goldstein
Deputy Secretary

August 18, 2008
For Immediate Release

Contact: Marissa Stone, NMED Communications Director
Telephone: (505) 827-0314 or (505) 231-0475
Contact: Deborah Busemeyer, Health Dept.
Office: 505-827-2619, Cell: 470-2290

State Investigates Nine *Salmonella* Cases Linked to Santa Fe Restaurant

(Santa Fe) – The New Mexico Department of Health and New Mexico Environment Department are investigating nine *Salmonella* cases in people who ate at Diego's Restaurant in Santa Fe from late July to early August. The investigation is ongoing and involves interviews of cases, laboratory testing of patients, food handlers and food from the restaurant, and an environmental investigation of the restaurant.

The New Mexico Environment Department's Food Program inspectors conducted an environmental investigation of the restaurant and discovered food handling problems that have been corrected. The department will continue to monitor the restaurant's sanitation and hygiene practices.

The age of patients ranged from 5 to 62. Eight cases live in Santa Fe County and one lives in San Miguel County. Two people were hospitalized, and no one has died. Patients reported becoming sick between Aug. 2 and 7.

Symptoms of food borne illness caused by *Salmonella* include fever, diarrhea and abdominal cramps approximately 12 hours to three days after eating contaminated food. The illness usually lasts four to seven days, and most people recover without treatment. However, infants, the elderly and those with impaired immune systems are more likely to have severe illness.

The most common ways in which someone may become infected with *Salmonella* is by eating food or drinking water that is contaminated with *Salmonella* bacteria or having close contact with a person who has a *Salmonella* infection.

Protect yourself from *Salmonella* infection by:

- Wash hands frequently with water and soap, and especially after using the toilet, changing a diaper or before preparing and/or eating food. (Sanitizing gel may be substituted when hands are not visibly soiled.)
- Wash raw fruits and vegetables prior to eating or chopping.

- Always treat raw poultry, beef and pork as if they are contaminated and handle accordingly.
- Wrap fresh meats in plastic bags at the market to prevent blood from dripping on other foods.
- Refrigerate foods promptly; minimize time kept at room temperature.
- Immediately washing cutting boards and counters used for preparation to prevent cross contamination with other foods.
- Ensure that the correct internal cooking temperature is reached, particularly when cooking in a microwave.
- Avoid chicks, ducklings, turtles and other reptiles as pets for small children.

The Department of Health encourages health care providers to obtain a stool specimen if they are evaluating people with signs of *Salmonella*, regardless of whether the person ate at the restaurant. Providers may contact the New Mexico Department of Health at 505-827-0006 for questions or consultation.

###