



**Public Health  
Division**

# County of Santa Cruz

## HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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### Press Release

**For Release: Immediately**

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#### SHIGELLA OUTBREAK LINKED TO RESTAURANT EXPOSURE IN SAN JOSE

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, CALIFORNIA – Santa Cruz County Public Health Communicable Disease Unit is currently investigating suspect cases of Shigella that may be linked to the current Shigella outbreak in Santa Clara County. Since Saturday October 17th, over 40 individuals have become acutely ill with fever, abdominal pain, and diarrhea and have been reported to the Santa Clara County Public Health Department (SCCPHD); all of these individuals ate at Mariscos San Juan restaurant #3 (205 N. 4th Street in San Jose) on Friday or Saturday (October 16th or 17th). Most of the ill persons reported to SCCPHD have required hospital admission, of which 12 required admission to intensive care. It is suspected that these cases represent only a small proportion of the total cases. Thus far, at least 15 of the reported cases are laboratory confirmed with Shigella (shigellosis). An investigation of this Shigella outbreak is underway, and lab results from additional cases are expected to arrive daily.

The restaurant was closed on the morning of Sunday, October 18th by SCCPHD and the Santa Clara County Department of Environmental Health (DEH), and it will remain closed until the safety of the public can be assured. It is suspected that the disease was spread by an infected food handler, but all possible sources of contamination are currently being investigated.

Shigellosis is a diarrheal disease caused by a group of bacteria called Shigella. Symptoms of shigellosis typically start within 3 hours to 2 days after exposure and include: diarrhea (sometimes bloody), fever, abdominal pain, tenesmus (a painful sensation of needing to pass stools even when bowels are empty), and vomiting. It is spread by eating or drinking something that has come into contact with stool of a person infected with Shigella. For example, food may become contaminated if it has been prepared by an infected food handler; water may be contaminated by infected fecal matter; or hands can be contaminated while changing the diaper of an infected child or caring for an infected person.

In persons with healthy immune systems, symptoms usually last about 5 to 7 days. Persons with diarrhea usually recover completely, although it may be several months before their bowel habits are entirely normal. Shigella can be very serious and in rare cases, fatal. Patients with severe diarrhea or vomiting may become dehydrated and require immediate medical attention to prevent shock.

If you ate at Mariscos San Juan restaurant #3 (205 N. 4th Street in San Jose) on Friday or Saturday, October 16th or 17th, and you had sudden onset of diarrhea and fever within 3 hours to 2 days after eating there, please seek medical attention so that you can be tested and, if your symptoms are severe, receive treatment.

