



# Barry-Eaton District Health Department

Be Active • Be Safe • Be Healthy

Barry County: 330 W. Woodlawn Ave., Hastings MI 49058  
Phone: 269-945-9516 Fax: 269-818-0237

Eaton County: 1033 Health Care Dr., Charlotte, MI 48813  
Phone: 517-543-2430 Fax: 517-543-7737

Eaton Behavioral Health: 1033 Health Care Dr., Charlotte, MI 48813  
Phone: 517-543-2580 Fax: 517-543-8191

**August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019**

## **Tequila's Mexican Grill Outbreak Investigation Complete**

The Barry-Eaton District Health Department (BEDHD) has completed its outbreak investigation at Tequila's Mexican Grill in Charlotte, Michigan. The investigation included an assessment of the restaurant environment concerning the most common risk factors for foodborne illness, an assessment of the food histories collected for both ill and well persons, and laboratory analysis of food samples and a single stool specimen.

Results of laboratory testing were inconclusive in pinpointing what caused the illnesses. This is not uncommon in foodborne outbreak investigations. Much of the food served at the onset of the outbreak was no longer available for sampling. Therefore, it is possible that the food collected and tested was not the source for the illnesses. Additionally, the single stool specimen tested did not reveal what caused the illness. Analysis of the food histories of both ill and well persons did not identify any one specific food item as being highly suspect for the reported illnesses. It is quite possible that more than one food item may have been the source for the reported illnesses.

The initial closing of the restaurant occurred on June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019. During the investigation there were several significant risk factors for foodborne illness found at the restaurant. These risk factors were Food Code violations related to food handling and storage. As the investigation progressed, the continued presence of these violations contributed to the second closing of the restaurant on June 21<sup>st</sup> alongside the determination that norovirus was an unlikely cause of the illness.

The restaurant was allowed to reopen on July 8<sup>th</sup>, but with continued oversight by both the restaurant's hired food safety consultant and BEDHD.

The update history regarding this outbreak can be accessed below or on BEDHD's website at [www.barryeatonhealth.org](http://www.barryeatonhealth.org).

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**July 8, 2019**

## **Tequila's Mexican Grill Cleared to Reopen**

The Barry-Eaton District Health Department has cleared Tequila's Mexican Grill in Charlotte, MI to reopen as of Monday evening, July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Tequila's is following an approved food safety plan after undergoing an inspection this afternoon. BEDHD will continue to monitor the restaurant's implementation of the plan to ensure food safety. BEDHD is not aware of the restaurant's exact reopening date and time.

Investigation into the cause of the June 2019 outbreak is still ongoing, and an exact cause has not been determined at this time.

BEDHD will provide updates on the investigation as information becomes available. To access this information visit the Barry-Eaton District Health Department's website at [www.barryeatonhealth.org](http://www.barryeatonhealth.org).

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**July 2, 2019**

## **Update as of July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019**

In coordination with the Barry-Eaton District Health Department (BEDHD), Tequila's Mexican Grill is still closed. The restaurant is cooperatively working with BEDHD and has hired a food safety consultant. The restaurant is working with BEDHD to create and follow a plan to re-open.

BEDHD has received 79 reports of ill individuals who ate at Tequila's Mexican Grill. The investigation is still continuing in regards to what caused the outbreak.

If you have questions or concerns about the outbreak, please contact BEDHD's Environmental Health Division at (517) 541-2615 during business hours (Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM-12:00 PM; 1:00 PM-5:00 PM). BEDHD will provide updates on the investigation as information becomes available. To access this information visit the Barry-Eaton District Health Department's website at [www.barryeatonhealth.org](http://www.barryeatonhealth.org).

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**June 21, 2019**

## **Update as of June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019**

The Barry-Eaton District Health Department (BEDHD) has closed Tequila's Mexican Grill again as of 11:45 AM on Friday, June 21<sup>st</sup>. BEDHD received additional information from the investigation and from epidemiology that suggests the illness is **not** norovirus. Based on this information, BEDHD staff reviewed additional food handling procedures at the restaurant and determined it was in the best interest of public health to close the restaurant. BEDHD staff will continue working with Tequila's Mexican Grill to assure food handling standards are being met. Once all requirements are implemented, BEDHD will consider re-opening the restaurant.

BEDHD is continuing to investigate this outbreak by analyzing the data collected so far. Individuals who reported their illnesses greatly assisted this investigation. The source of the illness is still unknown and the investigation is ongoing.

If you have questions or concerns about the outbreak, please contact BEDHD's Environmental Health Division at (517) 541-2615 during business hours (Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM-12:00 PM; 1:00 PM-5:00 PM). If you are feeling sick you may also contact your health care provider.

BEDHD will provide updates on the investigation as information becomes available. To access this information visit the Barry-Eaton District Health Department's website at [www.barryeatonhealth.org](http://www.barryeatonhealth.org).

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**June 20, 2019**

## **Update as of June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

The Barry-Eaton District Health Department (BEDHD) is continuing to investigate reports of gastrointestinal (digestive) illness in individuals who ate at Tequila's Mexican Grill between Saturday, June 15<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, June 18<sup>th</sup>. At this time, 39 individuals have contacted BEDHD to report feeling ill after eating at the restaurant. BEDHD is interviewing individuals that reported feeling well, and those who reported feeling ill after eating at Tequila's Mexican Grill. The source of the illness is still unknown and the investigation is ongoing.



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Tequila's Mexican Grill is cooperating with the investigation. On the evening of Tuesday, June 18<sup>th</sup>, all ready-to-eat food that had been prepared between Sunday, June 16<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, June 18<sup>th</sup> was discarded. On Wednesday, June 19<sup>th</sup> the restaurant completed environmental cleaning and BEDHD completed interviews with all staff. After these public health interventions BEDHD allowed Tequila's Mexican Grill to re-open with health department oversight at approximately 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 19<sup>th</sup>.

If you ate at Tequila's Mexican Grill (430 N Cochran Ave, Charlotte, MI 48813) on Saturday, June 15<sup>th</sup> through Tuesday, June 18<sup>th</sup> and are feeling ill (especially with nausea, abdominal cramping, vomiting, or diarrhea), please contact BEDHD's Environmental Health Division at (517) 541-2615. If you are feeling sick you may also contact your health care provider.

BEDHD will provide updates on the investigation as information becomes available. To access this information visit the Barry-Eaton District Health Department's website at [www.barryeatonhealth.org](http://www.barryeatonhealth.org).

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**June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

## **Restaurant Closure at Tequila's Mexican Grill in Charlotte**

On the evening of June 18<sup>th</sup>, the Barry-Eaton District Health Department (BEDHD) temporarily closed Tequila's Mexican Grill, located in Charlotte, Michigan. The closing was ordered after gastrointestinal (digestive) illness was reported in 10 individuals who ate at the restaurant for lunch on Sunday, June 16<sup>th</sup>. BEDHD is conducting an investigation of the restaurant and the illnesses.

On the morning of June 18<sup>th</sup>, BEDHD received the first complaint and received a second later in the day after investigation had begun. The restaurant will not open before employees are interviewed by BEDHD staff as part of the investigation. Next steps for Tequila's Mexican Grill will be decided based on the results of these interviews. The restaurant is cooperative and is participating in BEDHD's investigation.

All known individuals who were ill report feeling better.

If you ate at Tequila's Mexican Grill (430 N Cochran Ave, Charlotte, MI 48813) on Sunday, June 16<sup>th</sup> through Tuesday, June 18<sup>th</sup> and are feeling ill (especially with nausea, abdominal cramping, vomiting,



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or diarrhea), please contact BEDHD's Environmental Health Division at (517) 541-2615. If you are feeling sick, please also contact your health care provider.

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