

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

August 23, 2022

Suspect Foodborne Illness Outbreak at Public Event in Dryden

Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) is notifying the public of a situation that occurred at the Rhythm on the Range event in Dryden on August 20, 2022, that has resulted in at least 10 people reporting symptoms consistent with foodborne illness.

The investigation is ongoing at this time; however, NWHU suspects that the illness is associated with macaroni and cheese sold by a food vendor without a permit. Attendees who developed symptoms within 12 hours of eating at the event and have not been contacted by NWHU are asked to call their local NWHU office. Anyone concerned about ongoing illness should contact Telehealth or their health care provider.

Under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, anyone planning to operate a food premises must notify the local health unit before they begin operation. This requirement includes temporary food premises, such as those operated at special events and markets.

Customers should look for a Temporary Event Food Vendor Permit posted at the food vendor's location, which indicates that the premises has been inspected by NWHU. These permits must be posted at the event by the vendor for the public to see, and will include the following information:

- Permit Number
- Food Vendor's Name
- Permit Expiry Date
- List of food items that the vendor has been approved to serve
- Inspector's comments (if any)
- Inspector's signature and date of approval

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There are a few types of temporary food premises where the public will not usually see a Temporary Event Food Vendor Permit posted, as these vendors are exempt from most of the requirements of the food premises regulation:

- Farmers' market vendors at markets where more than 50% of the vendors are farmers selling their own farm products
- Temporary food premises operated at special events by service clubs, fraternal organizations, or religious groups.

For more information on food premises requirements at special events and markets, visit: <https://www2.nwhu.on.ca/our-services/food-safety/special-events-farmers-markets-and-wild-game-dinners/>.

NWHU thanks Rhythm on the Range event coordinators for their active participation and cooperation in the ongoing follow-up.

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