



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ORDERS EMBARGO OF FROZEN IMPORTED SCALLOPS AND CLOSURE OF GENKI SUSHI RESTAURANTS ON OAHU AND KAUAI

HONOLULU – Based on evidence gathered and analyzed during an extensive investigation spanning almost two months, the Hawaii State Department of Health has determined a strong association between a majority of the cases in the Hepatitis A outbreak first announced by the department on July 1, 2016. Investigation findings implicate frozen imported scallops served raw at Genki Sushi Restaurants as the likely source of Hepatitis A infection.

“After determining the strong probable link between the majority of cases, the department immediately notified Genki Sushi Restaurants, ordered the embargo of the frozen scallop product, and the closure of all Oahu and Kauai facilities,” said Health Director Dr. Virginia Pressler. “The business has complied with all orders, contacted all of their Hawaii restaurants, and is working with the department to ensure the safety of its customers. Our staff is in the field today working with distributors to embargo the product.”

Department of Health has ordered the embargo of all frozen scallop products distributed by Koha Oriental Foods and True World Foods in Hawaii. An embargo of products restricts their use, sale or distribution. Because Genki Sushi Restaurants on Oahu and Kauai had received, handled and served the product, the establishments were ordered to close immediately. Koha

Oriental Foods had supplied the product to Genki Sushi Restaurants on Oahu and Kauai. The frozen imported scallop product recently began to be distributed also by True World to Genki Sushi restaurants on Maui and Hawaii Island. Although there have been no cases related to these recent shipments, given the uncertainty of the safety of the product, all scallop products sent to these restaurants were embargoed as the department continues its investigation.

“Genki Sushi in Hawaii has a history of good compliance with food safety regulations which includes good employee hygiene,” said Peter Oshiro, Sanitation Branch Chief. “We will continue to work with Genki Sushi Restaurants to ensure their safe operation after the investigation is completed.”

Product tracing is being conducted to locate all potentially contaminated products. DOH has also been in contact with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Hawaii office to investigate the product origin. Food products imported from outside the state are regulated by the U.S. FDA.

“We are gratified to uncover this major piece of the investigation,” said State Epidemiologist Dr. Sarah Park, “my staff have been persistent and tireless in their search for clues to prevent new cases and put an end to the outbreak. Our investigation continues, as we work to confirm our findings and ensure contaminated product is no longer in circulation and the risk of transmission is eliminated.”

Genki Sushi Restaurants on Oahu and Kauai will remain closed until the Department of Health can ensure their safe operation. All frozen scallop products from distributors Koha Oriental Foods and True World Foods are being restricted and will be destroyed to prevent any further illness.

Anyone who consumed products, specifically scallops, prepared or served at Genki Sushi on Oahu or Kauai should consider contacting their healthcare provider about the possibility of receiving a vaccine or immune globulin (IG). A statewide list of vaccination locations is available at www.health.hawaii.gov. Individuals who ate at these restaurants longer than two weeks ago, should monitor their health for 50 days after their exposure and consult their doctor if they develop symptoms of hepatitis. All persons should practice thorough hand washing.

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