

Food poisoning victims on the mend

Nearly all of the students who contracted probable salmonella food poisoning at the Cather-Pound cafeteria Wednesday noon were on the mend Thursday afternoon.

Thirty-one men and women were hospitalized Wednesday at the Student Health Center, according to Dr. Kenneth D. Rose. All were released by Thursday evening.

The total number of stricken students has not yet been determined but estimates range from 100 to 250. Of the total "six were relatively serious," said Rose, a clinician at the University Health Center. "We had them in all degrees."

One student was sent to Lincoln General Hospital. Rose said this was not because he was exceptionally serious but because he preferred to go there.

The physician said it would be several days before conclusive evidence on the source and the exact type of food poisoning could be determined.

"Food patterns indicate now that the substance was either the runzas or a macaroni goulash," Rose said. "Both had the same meat source — hamburger."

"We can't point our finger at anybody," Rose cautioned. "We're just not sure what the cause is although indications are that the meat was handled properly after it arrived at the cafeteria."

The first cases were reported late Wednesday afternoon and continued coming in through the night. Rose said the food apparently was served only at the noon meal but some people

will not show the symptoms for up to 24 hours.

He said about 20% of those exposed to salmonella usually become sick. He thought this figure might hold true in this instance, but called it an "educated guess" since he's not sure it was salmonella.

A few students were still coming in Thursday complaining of symptoms of the poisoning.

"It hits you with a nausea," Rose said. "Your stomach tightens. Vomiting, diarrhea and cramps can be profound."

Secondary symptoms are dehydration and salt loss, which can cause even more serious problems, Rose said.

He added that when the students felt all right, they were sent back to the dormitories. Many were resting in bed Thursday, although a number were going to classes as usual. The chief nurse and public health personnel of the Center were in the dormitories

Wednesday night helping treat sick residents.

"This is something that everybody tries to keep from happening," said Del K. Weed, an environmentalist for the University Health Service. "Obviously in this case, something is wrong somewhere."

He said the University constantly strives to keep its equipment and utensils safe, as well as its personnel instructed on the dangers of food poisoning. Other living units would probably not be affected but the State Health Department, as well as Student Health and University Food Service officials are investigating, he added.

According to head coach Bob Devaney, none of the football squad has been affected by the outbreak.

Weed emphasized that the case has "a lot of open ends." He is not even certain the culprit is hamburger. Bacteriological samples will have to be studied along with other

evidence before definite conclusions can be reached.

Dr. Rose said the likelihood of food poisoning happening again is remote. He has been at the University more than ten years and has only encountered one other food poisoning case (in a sorority house) during that time.

The coordinator of food services for the University, Douglas Rix, said students remained calm during the crisis and demonstrated a great deal of maturity. "I don't think we are leaving anything untouched in trying to prevent a reoc-

currence," he said.

A \$5 fee is usually charged for after-hours treatment at Student Health. Health Center personnel said the decision on whether to charge the fee to poisoning victims will be made when Medical Director S. I. Fuenning returns from a business trip Friday.

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