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Health officials investigate possible bacteria exposures in Santa Ana River

Riverside County health officials are investigating a report of two Orange County residents with Shigella bacteria in which a section of the Santa Ana riverbed may have been the source of the infection.

While the source of the illness has not been confirmed, both patients said they had recently been to the same section of the Santa Ana River in Jurupa Valley.

City officials have closed the section of the river out of an abundance of caution.

“The public’s safety is always paramount. We advise the public to obey all posted signage closing access trails and entrances to the affected portion of the Santa Ana River,” said Riverside County Public Health Officer Dr. Cameron Kaiser. Additionally, the Riverside County Department of Environmental Health has reached out to state agencies to assist with the investigation.

Shigellosis is an illness caused by bacteria called Shigella that cause diarrhea in humans. Symptoms of shigellosis include diarrhea, which is often bloody, fever, and abdominal cramps. Symptoms usually occur within four days after exposure to Shigella, and last five to seven days. Most people with shigellosis recover completely. Anyone with concerns about illness should contact their healthcare provider.

The spread of Shigella can be stopped by frequent and careful handwashing with soap and taking other hygiene measures.