

South Tahoe food poisoning incidents increasing

By Kathryn Reed

Baja Fresh joins Raley's at Stateline in having food tampered with.

A 12-year-old felt sick after eating at Baja Fresh on Nov. 19. The child was treated for symptoms related to food poisoning at Barton Memorial Hospital.



Police are looking for this man.

South Lake Tahoe police officers said an unknown suspect put an unidentified substance on the salsa. The incident is similar to what occurred at the Raley's in the same shopping center.

"It's reasonable to assume there could be other places that are just now, because of media attention, realizing that they could also have been victims," Lt. Brian Williams told *Lake Tahoe News*. "They could have thrown out the food and restocked without calling the police. That would be reasonable."

A commenter on *Lake Tahoe News* last week wrote about a bleach-like smell at the salad bar at Goodfella's Pizza.

A bleach smell is the overriding similarity between the incidents.

The FBI office in Sacramento is now involved in the case.

"They are helping us facilitate with the laboratory analysis through the California Department of Health. They are prioritizing it," Williams said.

At this point the exact chemical being put on the food is not known.

Officers have surveillance photo of the suspect, but no identity or reason why he is doing this.

In talking with at Baja Fresh workers, police learned there were similar food tampering incidents in the previous two weeks.

The suspect is described as a white male adult, approximately 5-feet-7-inches, with a thin build. The suspect was last seen wearing a black hat, dark sunglasses, a black or dark-colored long sleeve shirt, black backpack, blue jeans, and black-and-white shoes.

Anyone with information should call the South Lake Tahoe Police Department at 530.542.6100 or Secret Witness at 530.541.6800. The South Lake Tahoe Police Department is also advising citizens to be wary of open-source or self-serve food, and to report any suspicious activity to the police.