

# Safe Food Storage Restaurant Safety Fatality File

## Boy Dies From Tainted Meat – 2-Year-Old Is First Victim Of Food Poisoning

A 2-year-old Tacoma boy died today from an infection linked to contaminated hamburgers from a fast-food restaurant.

It is the first death amongst more than 100 people sickened by the food-poisoning epidemic that has hit Puget Sound and surrounding areas this month. The outbreak is linked to Jack in the Box restaurants.

The Tacoma boy died at Children's Hospital Medical Center in Seattle of heart failure stemming from kidney failure caused by the bacteria E. coli 0157:H7. He was identified by the King County medical examiner's office as Michael Nole.

Today, the boy's grandfather, Joseph Nole, identified the child's parents as 30-year-old Michael Nole, a roofer, and Diana, who works at St. Joseph Hospital in Tacoma. The boy was their only child.

"He wasn't really awake the last couple of days, but last night we went in and talked to him and he seemed to know us. He'd squeeze your fingers," Joseph Nole said. "I can't believe he's gone. He was such a little sweetheart."

Nole said his grandson ate a cheeseburger on Jan. 11 at a Jack in the Box restaurant near his son's home on the south side of Tacoma. "He loved hamburgers," he said.

Joseph Nole said his grandson felt nauseated that night, developed diarrhea the next day, and then progressively grew worse.

Joseph Nole said his family is "very, very angry" about the boy's

death. "Someone's going to pay for this," he said. "It's just not right." He said parents of another sick child have contacted an attorney and asked his son if he wants to join in a lawsuit.

Nine other children are still in Children's Hospital, including eight on kidney dialysis. A 9-year-old girl is in critical condition and two others are in the intensive-care unit.

"We're still fighting hard . . . trying to treat these children," said Dr. Ellis Avner, director of Children's kidney unit. "We still feel we're ahead of the game. But this is pretty devastating."

The most seriously ill in the outbreak have been children. And, Avner said, they are significantly more affected by hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), a form of kidney failure which results in about 10 percent of those infected with E. coli 0157:H76.

"It appears to be a very severe outbreak," said Avner.

Most patients who suffer from HUS become very ill and need kidney dialysis; some may die or have chronic kidney failure, requiring lifetime dialysis treatment or a kidney transplant.

State health officials have found massive amounts of contamination in raw hamburger recalled from Jack in the Box restaurants early this week, confirming that the food-poisoning outbreak originated in the chain.

"These are very high numbers, exceedingly high numbers" said Bert Bartleson, a food expert with the state Department of Health, referring to fecal bacteria found in the hamburgers.