

Vomiting bug shuts Blumenthal's London restaurant

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Top British chef Heston Blumenthal has shut his London restaurant Dinner, which has two Michelin stars, for a week after 24 guests fell ill with the vomiting bug norovirus, officials said Sunday.

The closure comes five years after an [outbreak](#) of norovirus caused by contaminated shellfish forced Blumenthal to close The Fat Duck, his three-starred restaurant in Bray, west of the capital, for ten days.

Westminster City Council, the local authority, said 24 diners and 21 staff had been taken ill at Dinner, which was named the seventh best restaurant in the world in last year's San Pellegrino awards.

James Armitage, the council's food safety manager, said: "Test results this week have shown that there has been an outbreak of norovirus at the Dinner restaurant at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Knightsbridge.

"The operators have now temporarily closed the restaurant and we believe this is the responsible thing to do."

In an interview with the Mail on Sunday, Blumenthal said his decision to close the restaurant was driven by his previous experience at the Fat Duck.

"I will always err on the side of extreme caution—as The Who sang, 'I won't get fooled again'," the 47-year-old told the newspaper.

He added: "My goal has always been to pursue perfection in the kitchen and to amaze our guests with taste sensations beyond their imagination, rather than expose them to the risk of a really nasty couple of days of heaving."

Blumenthal was criticised for reacting too slowly to the 2009 outbreak of norovirus at The Fat Duck, when more than 500 diners reported falling ill.

The Health Protection Agency said the virus was probably introduced via contaminated or undercooked shellfish.

Dinner, which serves food inspired by historic British dishes, said on its website that it would be closed for one week from Sunday.

"We apologise for any inconvenience caused to those guests whose bookings have been cancelled," a spokeswoman said.

"However we understand how contagious this winter flu bug can be and will take every precaution necessary to protect our guests."

Noma, the two Michelin-starred Danish [restaurant](#) named the best in the world in 2010, 2011 and 2012, was hit by an outbreak of [norovirus](#) last year which made 63 diners ill.

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