

Health Advisory: National Hepatitis A Outbreaks

Minnesota Department of Health Mon May 20 11:00 CDT 2019

Action Steps

Local and tribal health departments: Please forward to hospitals, urgent care centers, clinics and convenience clinics in your jurisdiction.

Hospitals and clinics: Please distribute to health care providers who treat patients presenting with new illness.

Health care providers:

- Test patients with hepatitis A symptoms, testing should include hepatitis A IgM antibody testing and liver function tests.
- Report suspected cases and contact MDH at 1-877-676-5414 (toll-free) or 651-201-5414 with questions.
- Promote hepatitis A vaccine, especially among high risk patients.

Background

There are multiple hepatitis A outbreaks occurring across the U.S. Since the outbreaks were first identified in 2016, there have been over 17,000 cases, 9,500 hospitalizations, and 170 deaths in 22 states. The highest risk groups for acquiring hepatitis A in these outbreaks include:

- People who use injection and non-injection drugs.
- People experiencing homelessness or unstable housing.
- People who are currently or were recently incarcerated.
- Men who have sex with men (MSM).

Minnesota is not currently experiencing an outbreak; however, two recently identified cases have been infected in Minnesota with risk factors related to the national outbreaks. Additionally, there have been eight cases of hepatitis A identified in Minnesota associated with outbreaks in other states within the last 6 months. Given the nationwide outbreaks and the severity of hepatitis A infection, the Minnesota Department of Health has heightened urgency around hepatitis A case identification, reporting, and vaccination.

Testing

Test patients for hepatitis A if presenting with clinically compatible symptoms. Do not test asymptomatic patients.

Testing should include hepatitis A IgM antibody testing and liver function tests.

Symptoms include: fever, headache, fatigue, malaise, nausea, anorexia, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, dark urine, light colored stool, and jaundice.

Vaccinate

Promote hepatitis A vaccine among patients, including:

- People who use injection and non-injection drugs.
- People experiencing homelessness or unstable housing.
- People who are currently or were recently incarcerated.

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- Men who have sex with men.
- People with direct contact with someone who has hepatitis A.
- People traveling to areas where hepatitis A is common.
- All people who wish to be protected.

One dose of single-antigen hepatitis A vaccine has been shown to control outbreaks and provides protection in most individuals, but two doses should be given to ensure long-term protection.

Additional information on hepatitis A for clinicians and the general public are available on the MDH website at <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/hepatitis/a/index.html>.

Information on the national outbreaks can be found on the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/outbreaks/2017March-HepatitisA.htm>.

A copy of this HAN is available at <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/ep/han/index.html>
The content of this message is intended for public health and health care personnel and response partners who have a need to know the information to perform their duties.