

Health Advisory:

Hepatitis A in a Restaurant Worker, Dexter, Missouri

December 18, 2017

This document will be updated as new information becomes available. The current version can always be viewed at <http://www.health.mo.gov>.

The Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services (DHSS) is now using 4 types of documents to provide important information to medical and public health professionals, and to other interested persons:

Health Alerts convey information of the highest level of importance which warrants immediate action or attention from Missouri health providers, emergency responders, public health agencies, and/or the public.

Health Advisories provide important information for a specific incident or situation, including that impacting neighboring states; may not require immediate action.

Health Guidances contain comprehensive information pertaining to a particular disease or condition, and include recommendations, guidelines, etc. endorsed by DHSS.

Health Updates provide new or updated information on an incident or situation; can also provide information to update a previously sent Health Alert, Health Advisory, or Health Guidance; unlikely to require immediate action.

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Health Advisory
December 18, 2017

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SUBJECT: Hepatitis A in a Restaurant Worker, Dexter, Missouri

A case of hepatitis A was identified in a food handler who worked while potentially contagious at Huddle House in Dexter, Missouri. Exposure dates range from November 21, 2017 through December 2, 2017. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) distributed a news release to alert the public to the health risk due to this event. The news release is available at the following link: <http://health.mo.gov/information/news/2017/hepatitis121417>.

The purpose of this Health Advisory is to alert health care providers that patients may request testing or treatment related to exposure to the restaurant.

As is mentioned in the press release, it is important to note that a large, multistate outbreak of hepatitis A is ongoing that has affected the availability of hepatitis A vaccine. Information about this outbreak can be found at this link: <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/outbreaks/2017March-HepatitisA.htm>.

All state health departments have been allotted an amount of vaccine they can order on a monthly basis. Additional vaccine may be ordered by state health departments in the event it is needed for outbreak response for post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP).

Post-Exposure Prophylaxis

PEP with either hepatitis A vaccine or immune globulin (IG) is recommended for certain individuals who have been exposed to hepatitis A virus. PEP should be administered as soon as possible after exposure **within 2 weeks after exposure**. Based on current evidence gathered in this investigation, the effective period for PEP expired on December 16, 2017.

Due to the limited availability of hepatitis A vaccine, health care providers are asked to thoroughly assess the exposure history of patients requesting evaluation for PEP because of an exposure at Huddle House in Dexter, Missouri. Additionally, it should be noted that hepatitis A vaccine and IG are not available from DHSS for restaurant patrons. Providers who utilize private hepatitis A vaccine doses should be aware that restocking may not be possible due to the aforementioned national shortage.

Case Reporting

Given the current situation in Missouri and nationwide, providers should consider hepatitis A as a possible diagnosis for patients with compatible symptoms. Hepatitis A is reportable within 1 day of knowledge or suspicion of the infection, per 19 CSR 20-20.020. Early diagnosis and reporting helps to ensure that contacts needing PEP are reached while it can still be effective at preventing disease following an exposure. Known or suspected cases of hepatitis A can be reported to the local public health agency, or to DHSS at 573-751-6113, or 800-392-0272 (24/7).

Questions should be directed to DHSS' Bureau of Communicable Disease Control and Prevention at 573-751-6113 or 800-392-0272 (24/7).

Additional Information

Hepatitis A Questions and Answers for Health Professionals (CDC)

<https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav/havfaq.htm>

Updated Dosing Instructions for Immune Globulin (Human) GamaSTAN S/D for Hepatitis A Virus Prophylaxis (CDC, September 15, 2017)

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6636a5.htm>