

8/1/2019

** NOTICE: This health alert provides written guidance for health care professionals and others who may need to take action to prevent or control a notifiable condition. It is not intended to provide guidance for the general public.*

Hepatitis A Outbreak in Washington State

Actions Requested

1. Consider Hepatitis A Virus infection among individuals with compatible symptoms and those at increased risk, including individuals living homeless, individuals who use illicit drugs (injection and non-injection), alcohol, and men who have sex with men (MSM) including:
 - Fatigue, fever, headache, joint pain, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, loss of appetite, dark urine, clay-colored stools, and jaundice.
 - 70% of older children and adults develop symptoms including jaundice; 70% of infections in children < 6 years of age are asymptomatic.
2. Collect specimens for laboratory testing on patients with suspected HAV infection:
 - Serum for hepatitis A IgM and IgG and liver enzymes (including ALT, AST).
 - Test for hepatitis B (HBsAg and IgM) and hepatitis C (antibody/EIA) to rule out other types of viral hepatitis.
3. Ask patients about risk factors, including homelessness or unstable housing, sexual history, travel history, injection and non-injection drug use, contact with other ill persons, and obtain information about potentially exposed household members and other contacts.
4. Counsel patients with HAV infection about the importance of practicing good hand hygiene – including thoroughly washing hands after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating food and that they are most contagious (fecal-oral route) for 2 weeks before through 1 week after the onset of jaundice, and possibly longer if they have persistent diarrhea.
5. Exclude suspect or confirmed cases from volunteering and working in sensitive areas (food handling, health care, childcare settings), until assessed by Public Health.
6. Routinely counsel patients regarding risk for HAV infection and offer HAV vaccine at all clinical encounters to persons at increased risk, including those living homeless and persons who inject drugs and anyone who wishes to reduce their risk of infection.
7. Test symptomatic contacts of confirmed Hepatitis A cases for acute Hepatitis A infection.
8. Provide Post exposure prophylaxis to susceptible individuals recently exposed to hepatitis A virus:
 - One dose of single-antigen vaccine or immune globulin (IG) (0.1 mL/kg body weight) as soon as possible, within 2 weeks after exposure - **based on age and health status.**
 - Single-antigen hepatitis A vaccine at the age-appropriate dose for healthy individuals aged over 12 months



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- IG for children aged <12 months and individuals for whom vaccine is contraindicated
- IG in addition to a dose of vaccine for individuals over 40 years of age, immunocompromised individuals (including infected with HIV), and individuals with chronic liver disease

9. Report confirmed and suspected HAV cases to Public Health at 360-786-5470.

BACKGROUND

Washington State Department of Health has announced an outbreak of Hepatitis A within Washington State. Since 4/1/2019, thirteen cases of Hepatitis A have been diagnosed that meet the outbreak case definition. Multiple states across the country have reported outbreaks of Hepatitis A since 2017, primarily among individuals experiencing homeless and individuals who use illicit drugs. Since the outbreaks were first identified, 25 states have reported over 22,500 cases and 13,000 hospitalization. Rates of hospitalization are higher than typical for Hepatitis A Virus infection, and severe complications have been reported, including liver transplantation or death; at least 221 deaths have occurred nationwide.

Hepatitis A Virus can spread easily in communities experiencing homelessness and crowded settings where handwashing facilities are limited, and sanitation is poor. The best way to prevent HAV infection is through vaccination with the hepatitis A vaccine

RESOURCES:

DOH – Hepatitis A Outbreak www.doh.wa.gov/hepatitisA2019

CDC Hepatitis A information for health professionals: <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/HA/>

CDC Hepatitis A Prevention of Vaccine Preventable Diseases
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/pinkbook/hepa.html>

THANK YOU FOR REPORTING!

TO REPORT A NOTIFIABLE CONDITION IN THURSTON COUNTY	
Voice mail for reporting Non-immediately reportable conditions (24 hours a day)	Phone: 360-786-5470 Fax: 360-867-2601
Day time immediately reportable conditions	360-867-2500 ask staff to locate Communicable Disease staff
After hours immediately and 24-hour reportable conditions or a public health emergency	Call 911 and ask staff to locate the Health Officer. If calling from outside Thurston County, call 360-704-2740 and ask staff to locate the Health Officer.
No one is available with Thurston County Public Health and condition is immediately notifiable	1-877-539-4344