

DATE: November 14, 2017 **END DATE:** December 14, 2017

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RE: Hepatitis A

Genesee County Health Department (GCHD) reports three new Hepatitis A cases for the month of October. In 2017, five confirmed cases of Hepatitis A have been reported in Genesee County. There is an ongoing outbreak of Hepatitis A across Michigan with cases associated with the outbreak being reported from the City of Detroit, and the counties Macomb, Wayne, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, Monroe, Ingham, Livingston, Sanilac, Lapeer, Calhoun, Clare, Isabella, Hillsdale, and Huron. One case from Genesee County has been linked to this outbreak. Since August 1, 2016, more than 495 confirmed cases of Hepatitis A have been reported to be associated with this outbreak in Michigan. As there are indications that the outbreak could spread, the Genesee County Health Department wants to remind residents that the most effective way to prevent Hepatitis A infection is through vaccination and proper handwashing.

Hepatitis A, a vaccine-preventable disease, is an infection of the liver caused by the Hepatitis A virus (HAV) and is most commonly spread from person to person through the fecal-oral route (i.e. ingestion of something that has been contaminated with the feces of an infected person). One can get HAV by eating contaminated food or drinking water, during sex, or just by living with an infected person. Symptoms of HAV infection include sudden abdominal pain, dark urine, nausea, fatigue, diarrhea, headache, fever, loss of appetite, and vomiting followed by yellowing of the eyes or skin. Symptoms typically appear about one month after exposure, but may appear within two to six weeks of being exposed. The risk of infection is highest for individuals who live with, have sexual contact with, or share injection or non-injection illegal drugs with someone who has Hepatitis A.

How to prevent hepatitis A infection:

- Vaccination with the Hepatitis A vaccine is the best way to prevent HAV infection and is safe for all individuals including those with liver disease or weakened immune systems. One dose is at least 90 percent effective at preventing infection if given before or within two weeks after exposure to the virus. Hepatitis A vaccine is available at local pharmacies, through some healthcare providers, or at local health departments.
- Good hand hygiene is integral to prevention. Wash your hands after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating meals.
- Use your own towels, toothbrushes, and eating utensils and do not share food, drinks, drugs, or smokes with other people.
- Do not have sex with someone who has HAV infection.

Please speak to your healthcare provider about your risks for HAV infection. Seek medical attention if you develop signs or symptoms of Hepatitis A.

GCHD wants you and your family to stay up-to-date on the most recent information and surveillance regarding Hepatitis A. For more information about Hepatitis A please visit our website at www.gchd.us. Additional information and current recommendations can also be found at <http://www.michigan.gov/hepatitisaoutbreak> and <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav/afaq.htm>.

Your Health. Our Work.

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