

HEALTH ADVISORY



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



TO: Physicians and other health care providers

Please distribute a copy of this information to each provider in your organization.

Questions regarding this information may be directed to the office of:

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Health Officer
Clark County Public Health
Phone: 564.397.8412

Alert categories:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.

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Hepatitis A outbreaks in Washington; vaccination of at-risk individuals requested



Summary

The Washington State Department of Health announced a [multi-county Hepatitis A \(HAV\) outbreak](#) on July 30. Clark County has no known Hepatitis A cases associated with the outbreak at this time.

Actions requested

- Be vigilant for potential Hepatitis A infections, especially among persons who are at increased risk:
 - Persons experiencing homelessness
 - Persons who use illicit drugs (injection and non-injection)
 - Men who have sex with men
- Primary care providers, acute care facilities and emergency departments can help to prevent a HAV outbreak by offering vaccine during all clinical encounters with susceptible people at increased risk. Do not delay immunization if a patient has unknown immune status.
- Immediately notify Clark County Public Health of suspected Hepatitis A infections within 24 hours of case identification. This will help facilitate timely public health investigation.
 - Phone: 564.397.8182
 - Fax: 564.397.8080

Vaccine recommendations

- The best way to prevent HAV infection is through vaccination with the Hepatitis A vaccine. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends everyone older than 1 year who is experiencing homelessness be immunized against HAV.
- The vaccine series should be initiated in people experiencing homelessness, despite concerns the series will not be completed. One dose of single-antigen Hepatitis A vaccine has been shown to control outbreaks and provides up to 95 percent sero-protection in healthy individuals for up to 11 years.

Background

Multiple states across the country have reported outbreaks of HAV, primarily among persons experiencing homelessness and persons who use illicit drugs. Since the outbreaks were first identified nationally in 2017, 25 states have reported more than 22,500 cases and 13,000 hospitalizations.

Rates of hospitalization are higher than typical for HAV infections, and severe complications have been reported, including liver transplantation and death. At least 221 deaths have occurred nationwide. People with chronic liver disease are at increased risk for fulminant

Hepatitis A, should they become infected, and susceptible people with chronic liver disease should be vaccinated.

HAV can spread easily in places where people experiencing homelessness gather and crowded settings where handwashing facilities are limited and sanitation is poor.

Additional resources

Washington Department of Health 2019 Hepatitis A Outbreak web page: www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/Immunization/DiseasesandVaccines/HepatitisADisease/HepatitisA2019

CDC ACIP Vaccine Recommendations and Guidelines:
www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/vacc-specific/hepa.html

CDC “Pink Book” Excerpt on HAV: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/pinkbook/downloads/hepa.pdf

CDC Health Update: Widespread Outbreaks of Hepatitis A among People Who Use Drugs and People Experiencing Homelessness across United States, March 25, 2019: <https://emergency.cdc.gov/han/han00418.asp>