



San Mateo County Health System

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HEALTH ADVISORY – September 26, 2017

Hepatitis A Outbreaks in California: Prevention Recommendations for San Mateo County Providers

This message is intended for primary care, emergency medicine, urgent care, emergency medical services, infectious disease, and healthcare personnel who provide services to the homeless or illicit drug-using populations.

SITUATION

Three California counties have declared outbreaks of hepatitis A (HAV) among residents who are homeless and/or use illicit drugs. Since November 2016 to the present, San Diego County has identified at least 444 cases of HAV infection and 16 deaths. Likewise, Santa Cruz County has identified and reported at least 69 cases of HAV infection since April 2017. Since the beginning of September 2017, Los Angeles County has identified 8 cases of HAV infection. **To date no related cases have been identified in San Mateo County.**

San Mateo County Health System is carefully monitoring for potential cases of HAV infection. As a preventive measure, the San Mateo County Health System mobile clinic and street medicine teams will be deployed to offer HAV vaccine to at-risk populations.

ACTIONS REQUESTED OF CLINICIANS:

1. **VACCINATE** all non-HAV immune patients who are homeless and/or use illicit drugs. Serologic testing for HAV infection is not recommended for asymptomatic people, nor is serologic testing for HAV immunity recommended as screening before vaccination.
2. **SUSPECT HAV INFECTION** in patients who have close contact with or who are homeless, intermittently homeless, and/or use illicit drugs who have abrupt onset of HAV symptoms (nausea, anorexia, fever, malaise, abdominal pain, dark urine, diarrhea, and clay stools), jaundice, and elevated serum aminotransferase levels. Confirm with serum Hepatitis A IgM testing.
3. **IMMEDIATELY REPORT** all suspected and confirmed HAV cases to the San Mateo County Communicable Disease Control Program by calling 650-573-2346. After hours, call 650-363-4987 and ask for the on-call Health Officer.
4. **DO NOT DISCHARGE** patients to the street who are diagnosed with HAV until at least a week after the onset of jaundice.

For additional information and resources regarding the HAV outbreak in homeless and illicit drug users, please see the full contents of this Health Advisory on the San Mateo County Communicable Disease Webpage.

In the recent outbreaks, HAV is primarily being transmitted person-to-person through close contact or through contact with fecal material in a contaminated environment. No commercial product has been identified as being contaminated. Efforts to control these HAV outbreaks have focused on providing Hepatitis A vaccine to at-risk populations and education about hand hygiene with soap and water, environmental cleaning and disinfection.

Healthcare workers who may have contact with suspected HAV cases and who lack HAV immunity should consider obtaining the HAV vaccine through their employer or health plan. The Affordable Care Act requires health plans such as Medi-Cal to cover HAV vaccines as preventive care without a deductible or co-pay charge.

The first dose of single-antigen HAV vaccine appears to provide protection to more people than the first dose of the combined HAV/HBV (Twinrix ©) vaccine. Providers should consider the short-term risks of exposure to HAV, the likelihood of follow-up to complete multidose immunization and the need for protection from HBV when selecting vaccines for those at risk. Immunization against HAV with existing supplies should not be delayed to obtain a different formulation of vaccine. Hepatitis B vaccine is also recommended for injection drug users who are not known to be immune. A complete vaccination series is needed for full protection.

Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) with HAV vaccine (and in some cases, intramuscular immune globulin, IG) is effective in non-HAV immune persons who have been exposed to HAV in the prior two weeks. For additional information regarding PEP, please see the link below.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
[Hepatitis A for Health Care Providers](#)

[Hepatitis A General Fact Sheet](#)

[Hepatitis A Q&A for the Public](#)

[Hepatitis A Vaccine Information Statement](#)

[Viral Hepatitis Fact Sheet for Gay and Bisexual Men](#)

California Department of Public Health
[Hepatitis A Website](#)

[Quicksheet: Hepatitis A](#)

[All Facilities Notification 8-15-17](#)

[Clinical Advisory Notification 7-13-17](#)

[Hepatitis A Postexposure Prophylaxis Guidance](#)

The Communicable Disease Control Program is available to help meet the reporting needs of, and answer questions for, San Mateo County providers. To report a disease or outbreak, please call 650-573-2346, Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, or fax a Confidential Morbidity Report (CMR) to 650-573-2919. You may download an electronic copy of the CMR at smchealth.org/cmr. Web-based reporting via CalREDIE is also available. Please contact us if you would like to know more about, and sign up for, web-based reporting. Non-urgent questions and/or general inquiries may be directed to SMCCDControl@smcgov.org.