



Date: 27 September 2017
 To: Health Care Providers
 From: Alvaro Garza, MD, MPH, Health Officer

Please distribute to all providers and relevant medical staff in your office.

Health Advisory

Hepatitis A potential high in San Joaquin County Homeless

Large outbreaks of hepatitis A virus (HAV) disease are currently ongoing in San Diego (444 cases) and Santa Cruz (69 cases) Counties, largely in persons who are homeless and/or use illicit drugs; and cases are starting to show in other counties. Transmission is presumed to occur person-to-person. To date, no similar type cases have been reported in San Joaquin County. The yearly average of hepatitis A disease reported here is four. However, our county is at risk for a similar outbreak because, based on current information, all populations who are homeless or use injection or non-injection illicit drugs are considered at risk if exposed to HAV. Please see below for actions requested of clinicians to help prevent hepatitis.

ACTIONS REQUESTED OF CLINICIANS:

Think: hepatitis A disease among patients presenting with compatible symptoms, especially among the homeless and injection or non-injection illicit drug users.

Test: for HAV IgM.

Treat: supportive.

Prevent: by offering **HAV vaccine** to all persons at high risk, including the homeless, injection and non-injection illicit drug users, healthcare and other service workers (e.g., homeless shelter and jail staff), sanitation workers, food handlers, and men who have sex with men. Also, remind everyone about proper hand hygiene.

Report: suspected and confirmed (IgM positive) cases within one (1) working day of identifying them by calling the PHS Communicable Disease Program at (209) 468-3822 during business hours Monday through Friday.

Background:

Hepatitis A is an acute illness with discrete onset of any sign or symptom consistent with acute viral hepatitis (e.g., fever, headache, malaise, anorexia, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain), and either a) jaundice, or b) elevated serum alanine aminotransferase (ALT) or aspartate aminotransferase (AST) levels. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) notes that person-to-person (fecal-oral) transmission through close contact is the primary way people get hepatitis A in the U.S. The primary strategies for outbreak control are vaccination and improving access to sanitation.

Additional Information:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav/index.htm>

CA Department of Public Health:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/Hepatitis-A.aspx>

Public Health Services Communicable Disease Program at (209) 468-3822.