

Hepatitis A Information for Food Service Establishments



Hepatitis A is a contagious liver disease that results from infection with the hepatitis A virus. The virus is found in the stool of people with the infection and is usually spread by consuming food or water contaminated with the virus.

PREVENTION

Food service establishments can take a proactive role in preventing hepatitis A exposures.

Recommendations include:

1. Train employees and ensure they comply with appropriate food handling regulations, including frequent and thorough handwashing;
2. Implement a policy for sick employees to stay home; and
3. Encourage employees to talk to their healthcare providers about vaccination.

EXPOSURE NOTIFICATION

A potential exposure occurs when an infected food handler (person who directly prepares, serves, or handles food) works while infectious (two weeks before symptoms start to one week after start of symptoms). Although the likelihood of infection is very low, if proper handwashing and food handling procedures are followed, patrons of the food establishment must be notified as a precaution.

Notification of the potential exposure to the public will occur via DOH press release for food service establishments who are unable to notify their customers directly. All food service establishments identified as potential exposure sites will be listed on the DOH website,

<http://health.hawaii.gov/docd/hepatitis-a-outbreak-2016/>.

TESTING

Hawaii State law requires contacts of cases* who are food handlers, if not vaccinated before their exposure, be tested and have a negative hepatitis A IgM test before returning to work. Hepatitis A vaccine or immune globulin (IG), if indicated, should be administered after test results are received.

DOCUMENTATION

Employers should keep employee vaccination and/or IgM test records on file. If a food service employee is infected with hepatitis A, the Department of Health will request the employee's work schedule and the names and contact information for employees who worked with the individual while infectious (two weeks before symptoms start to one week after start of symptoms).

RESOURCES

More information about hepatitis A:

Hawaii Department of Health: <http://health.hawaii.gov/docd/dib/disease/hepatitis-a/>

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

Vaccinating pharmacies:

http://health.hawaii.gov/docd/files/2013/07/IMM_Adult_Resource_List.pdf

*A contact of a case is defined as:

- All unvaccinated household members
- All unvaccinated sexual contacts
- Anyone sharing illicit drugs with a case
- Anyone sharing food or eating or drinking utensils with a case
- Anyone consuming ready-to-eat foods prepared by an infectious food handler