



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

LORETTA J. FUDDY, A.C.S.W., M.P.H.
DIRECTOR
Phone: (808) 586-4410
Fax: (808) 586-4444

For Immediate Release: June 3, 2013

13-033

**DOH INVESTIGATING HEPATITIS A CASES LINKED TO
FROZEN BERRY PRODUCT**

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) is investigating three adult cases of hepatitis A infection, two on Oahu and one on Kauai. All cases have a history of consuming a frozen berry product from Costco. Townsend Farms Organic Antioxidant Blend, which is distributed by Costco, has been implicated in a multi-state hepatitis A outbreak. The residents, who became ill in early to late May, are recovering or have recovered. One required brief hospitalization.

The product was sold at Costco stores in Hawaii, and has been voluntarily recalled. DOH has been advised by a Costco representative that the product was pulled from its shelves in all Hawaii stores from May 29 to 30. Costco reports that they have been contacting all customers, who purchased the product, regarding its recall. The public is advised to discard or return any remaining product.

Hepatitis A is a virus that can cause fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, abdominal discomfort, dark urine, diarrhea, and yellow skin and eyes. Illness usually occurs from two weeks to as long as 50 days after consumption of contaminated food or water (e.g., prepared by an infected food handler who did not properly wash their hands or from produce contaminated in the field). Persons should seek medical attention immediately should they develop symptoms.

“Hepatitis A infection is a vaccine preventable disease, and fortunately, most children and adolescents have been vaccinated as part of routine childhood vaccination recommendations,” said Dr. Sarah Park, state epidemiologist. “However, many adults have not been vaccinated and will be susceptible.”

(more)

DOH Investigating Hepatitis A Cases
Page 2

Anyone who consumed the implicated product during the past month is encouraged to consult their medical provider regarding vaccination. Most persons with hepatitis A infection will recover without complications but may require supportive therapy and close monitoring by their physician. All cases of suspected hepatitis A infection should be reported to the Department of Health by calling (808) 586-4586.

For more information regarding the multistate outbreak, please refer to the CDC website:
<http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/Outbreaks/2013/A1b-03-31/index.html>.

For more information regarding hepatitis A, please refer to the Department of Health fact sheet:
<http://hawaii.gov/health/DOCD/DIB/HepatitisA.html>.

For a list of pharmacies that provide hepatitis A vaccine, please refer to
<http://hawaii.gov/health/Immunization/Documents/AdultVaxResourceList.pdf>.

#

For more information on this news release, contact:
Judy Kern
Disease Outbreak Control Division
Phone: (808) 587-6372