



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
P. O. BOX 3378  
HONOLULU, HI 96801-3378

In reply, please refer to:  
File:

June 30, 2016

MEDICAL ADVISORY: HEPATITIS A CLUSTER  
INVESTIGATION ON OAHU

Dear Healthcare Provider,

The Hawaii Department of Health (HDOH) is investigating at least 7 cases of hepatitis A virus (HAV) infection on Oahu. Onset dates have ranged from June 16–26, 2016, suggesting exposure during the month of May. HDOH is urging providers to be vigilant and consider HAV infection in patients with a consistent clinical presentation. Cases of HAV infection, which is URGENTLY notifiable, should be reported by telephone as soon as illness is suspected—do not wait for laboratory confirmation to report. Please be prepared to provide your patient's AST (SGOT) and ALT (SGPT) values.

HAV transmission is usually person-to-person by fecal-oral route or through a contaminated vehicle such as food. Infected persons are most infectious during the 1–2 weeks before onset of jaundice or elevation of liver enzymes, when concentration of virus in the stool is highest, until one week after jaundice or symptom onset. The incubation period for HAV infection may be 15–50 days (average 28 days). Onset of symptoms is usually abrupt with fever, malaise, anorexia, nausea, dark urine, abdominal discomfort, and jaundice. Diarrhea may also occur. Many cases, especially children, have mild or asymptomatic infection. Clinical illness typically last several weeks and resolves within 2 months. Household and sexual contacts are at increased risk of infection.

Diagnosis requires detection of IgM antibodies against HAV (anti-HAV IgM) in serum of acutely or recently ill patients. IgM generally becomes detectable 5–10 days before symptom onset and may remain detectable for up to 6 months.

Persons who have recently been exposed to HAV and who previously have not received HAV vaccine should receive a single dose of single-antigen hepatitis A vaccine or immune globulin (IG; 0.02 mL/kg) as soon as possible, **within 2 weeks after exposure**.<sup>\*</sup> The efficacy of IG or vaccine when administered greater than 2 weeks after exposure has not been established.

- For healthy persons aged 12 months–40 years, single-antigen hepatitis A vaccine at the age-appropriate dose is preferred.

---

\* For further information regarding hepatitis A post-exposure prophylaxis, please refer to:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/HAV/HAVfaq.htm#D1>

**\*\* This message contains privileged communication between the Department of Health and clinicians and should not be shared with or forwarded to those not included among the original recipients. \*\***

- For persons aged >40 years, IG is preferred; vaccine can be used if IG cannot be obtained.
- For children aged <12 months, immunocompromised persons, persons with chronic liver disease, and persons for whom vaccine is contraindicated, IG should be used.

Persons with HAV infection should be excluded from food-handling and direct-care occupations for the first 2 weeks of illness and at least 7 days after onset of jaundice. Children with HAV infection should be excluded from preschool for 10 days after illness onset.

Oahu (Disease Investigation Branch) .....(808) 586-4586  
Maui District Health Office .....(808) 984-8213  
Kauai District Health Office .....(808) 241-3563  
Big Island District Health Office (Hilo) .....(808) 933-0912  
Big Island District Health Office (Kona).....(808) 322-4877  
After hours on Oahu.....(808) 566-5049  
After hours on Neighbor Islands.....(808) 360-2575 (toll free)

We appreciate your assistance in monitoring and preventing HAV infection among Hawaii's residents and visitors.

Sincerely,



Sarah Y. Park, MD, FAAP  
State Epidemiologist  
Hawaii Department of Health