



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

In reply, please refer to:  
File:

November 30, 2020

**Medical Advisory: Hepatitis A Cluster on Oahu**

Dear Healthcare Provider:

The Hawaii Department of Health (HDOH) is investigating four cases of hepatitis A virus (HAV) infection on Oahu. Onset dates have ranged from November 9<sup>th</sup> to November 13<sup>th</sup>, suggesting exposure during October 2020. There is no history of travel and no common source among these four cases has been identified to date. HDOH is urging providers to be vigilant and consider HAV infection in patients with a consistent clinical presentation. HAV infection is urgently notifiable and 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), ALT (SGPT), and bilirubin values.

HAV is transmitted most commonly through the fecal-oral route by:

- Close person-to-person contact with an infected person
- Sexual contact with an infected person
- Ingestion of contaminated food or water

Persons with HAV are most infectious during the 1 – 2 weeks prior to 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, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, dark urine, clay-colored stools, joint pain, and jaundice. Seventy percent of HAV infections in children younger than 6 years of age are asymptomatic. Clinical illness typically lasts several weeks and resolves within 2 months.

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

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

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- Persons aged  $\geq 12$  months should receive one dose of single-antigen hepatitis A vaccine at the age-appropriate dose.
- In addition to hepatitis A vaccine, IG (0.1 mL/kg) may be administered to persons aged  $>40$  years, depending on provider's [risk assessment](#) (Appendix B).
- Persons aged  $\geq 12$  months who are immunocompromised or have chronic liver disease should receive both IG (0.1 mL/kg) and hepatitis A vaccine simultaneously in different anatomic sites.
- For children aged  $<12$  months and persons for whom vaccine is contraindicated, IG should be administered.

For further information on post-exposure prophylaxis, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav/havfaq.htm#E1>

Persons with HAV infection must 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.

Please report any clinically suspected case of Hepatitis A immediately – do NOT wait for laboratory confirmation:

Oahu (Disease Reporting Line) ..... (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) 600-3625  
After hours on neighbor islands ..... (800) 360-2575 (toll free)

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

Sincerely,



Sarah Kemble, M.D.  
Acting State Epidemiologist

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