



MID-MICHIGAN DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT

An Accredited Local Public Health Department

www.mmdhd.org

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November 21, 2017

Dear Community Partner:

You may be aware that since August 2016 there have been nearly 500 cases of hepatitis A in Southeast Michigan. **Isabella County has had 4 cases of acute hepatitis A virus since September 2017.** Testing to confirm if these cases are part of the Southeast Michigan outbreak is still pending. One of these four cases did occur in a food handler at Meijer; none of the additional cases have been linked to, or caused by, that case. Prior to this year, Isabella County had not had a case of hepatitis A since 2011. **Due to this rapid increase in cases, Isabella County is currently experiencing an outbreak of acute hepatitis A infections.**

We would like to work together to ensure those at highest risk for infection receive the best prevention possible: hepatitis A vaccination. Those considered at highest risk for hepatitis A are:

- Persons with a history of substance abuse (both injection and non-injection drugs)
- Persons currently homeless or in transient living
- Men who have sex with men (MSM)
- Persons incarcerated in correctional facilities (in jail or at risk for being in jail)
- Persons who are in close contact with any of the above risk groups (either through their employment, volunteer work, or social situation)
- Persons with underlying liver disease (while not at higher risk of infection, these individuals are at increased risk of complications)

Vaccination has also been recommended for:

- Food handlers:
 - Food handlers with one or more of the above risk factors should be vaccinated with high priority
 - Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is recommending that all other food handlers in outbreak areas be encouraged to receive the hepatitis A vaccination in an attempt to prevent any potential foodborne spread of hepatitis A due to an ill worker.
- Healthcare workers:
 - Routine hepatitis A vaccination of healthcare workers is not typically recommended.
 - In the outbreak areas, it is being recommended by MDHHS to vaccinate healthcare workers who care for patients.
 - Priority should be given to healthcare workers caring for the highest volume of high-risk individuals, such as workers in emergency departments, EMS, paramedics, first responders, etc.

*Your Public Health Team,
Connecting with our Communities to Achieve Healthier Outcomes.*

Community Partner

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If you, your employees, those you work with, or those you are in contact with fall into any of these categories, we urge vaccination. You may discuss vaccination options with your employer, physician, pharmacy, or contact the local branch of your health department to discuss individual vaccination or larger vaccination clinic options if needed for your organization.

Numerous educational and promotional materials are available at www.michigan.gov/hepatitisAoutbreak as well as <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav>. Please contact us at the health department if you have any questions or concerns.

To your health,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Morse', with a stylized, cursive script.

Jennifer Morse, MD

Medical Director

Mid-Michigan District Health Department

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