



Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
Atlanta GA 30329-4027

September 12, 2018

Dear Emergency Room Clinician,

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is supporting state and local health departments in investigating outbreaks of hepatitis A virus (HAV) infection nationwide. The outbreaks are occurring primarily among people reporting drug use, people experiencing homelessness, men who have sex with men, incarcerated or recently incarcerated individuals, and close contacts of HAV infected cases. While HAV infection is typically self-limited, morbidity and mortality in the current outbreaks have been higher than usual due to older age and comorbidities, especially chronic liver disease, of people affected by this outbreak.

We are asking your assistance to help control these HAV outbreaks by vaccinating those at risk. Since many people at risk may be more likely to engage with the healthcare system in an emergency department setting, rather than primary care, we are asking you to do the following:

1. Vaccinate the following groups against hepatitis A based on CDC recommendations:
 - Individuals who are MSM
 - Individuals who report drug use (both injection and non-injection)
 - Individuals who are close contacts of identified cases
2. Encourage hepatitis A vaccination for people experiencing homelessness and incarcerated or recently incarcerated individuals.
3. Consider hepatitis A diagnosis in anyone with jaundice and clinically compatible symptoms.
4. Ensure all persons diagnosed with hepatitis A infection are reported to the health department in a timely manner.

HAV infection is a vaccine-preventable communicable disease that is easily spread through close contact, as well as from sharing injection and non-injection drugs. Hepatitis A vaccine is typically given as a two-dose series spaced at least six months apart; however, for previously unvaccinated persons, a single dose of hepatitis A vaccine is 95% seroprotective, can provide protection for up to 11 years, and has been demonstrated to help curb outbreaks.

These outbreaks are affecting hard to reach populations, and CDC is supporting state and local health departments in requesting assistance from emergency departments in affected areas. Emergency departments might be the only opportunity to provide hepatitis A vaccination to people at highest risk. Thank you for your assistance.

For more information from CDC, visit the [CDC hepatitis A outbreak website](#).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul J. Weidle PharmD MPH".

Paul J. Weidle, PharmD, MPH, CAPT, USPHS
Acting Director, Division of Viral Hepatitis
National Center for HIV, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention