



# HEALTH Update

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## Update: Widespread Outbreaks of Hepatitis A among People Who Use Drugs and People Experiencing Homelessness across the United States

**Summary:** Multiple states across the country have reported outbreaks of hepatitis A, primarily among people who use drugs and people experiencing homelessness. Since the hepatitis A outbreaks were first identified in 2016, more than 15,000 cases, 8,500 (57%) hospitalizations, and 140 deaths as a result of hepatitis A virus (HAV) infection have been reported. This Health Alert Network (HAN) update recommends that public health departments, healthcare facilities, and partners and programs providing services to affected populations vaccinate at-risk groups against hepatitis A, applying the updated recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

### New ACIP Recommendations since the June 2018 HAN00412 (<https://emergency.cdc.gov/han/han00412.asp>)

1. As of November 2, 2018, ACIP recommends hepatitis A vaccine for post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for people 12 months of age and older. Providers may also administer immunoglobulin to adults older than 40 years of age, if indicated, and persons who are immunocompromised or have chronic liver disease.
2. As of February 15, 2019, ACIP recommends hepatitis A vaccination for people experiencing homelessness.

### **Ohio's Hepatitis A Outbreak Summary (March 25, 2019):**

- **Number of cases: 2005** – The number of cases continue to rise each week.
- **Illness onset range: 01/05/2018 – 03/19/2019**
- **Age range: 1-84 years**
- **Gender: 60% male**
- **Number of hospitalizations: 1235 (62%)** – Average hospitalization rate for hepatitis A is 30%.
- **Number of deaths: 7**
- **Number of counties with cases: 72 (82%)**

### CDC Recommendations for Healthcare Providers

1. Screen patients for risk factors (e.g., drug use, homelessness, incarceration, MSM, and chronic liver disease).
2. Recommend and administer hepatitis A vaccine to at-risk patients, regardless of the original presenting complaint or the type of clinical facility. In particular, the emergency department may be an individual's only interaction with the healthcare system and is an important opportunity for prevention.
3. Record immunizations in the state immunization information system (registry).
4. Consider hepatitis A as a diagnosis in anyone with jaundice or clinically compatible symptoms.
5. Rapidly report all persons diagnosed with hepatitis A to the health department to ensure timely case investigation and follow-up of contacts.

One dose of single-antigen hepatitis A vaccine has been shown to control outbreaks of hepatitis A and provides up to 95% seroprotection in healthy individuals for up to 11 years.<sup>3, 4</sup> Pre-vaccination serologic testing is not required to administer hepatitis A vaccine. Vaccinations should not be postponed if vaccination history cannot be obtained or records are unavailable.

**The Logan County Health District has Hepatitis A vaccine available. Now accepting most insurances and those with no insurance for the Hepatitis A vaccine. Call 937-651-6187 to register.**

If you have any questions regarding these changes call Kelly Reaver R.N. Director of Nursing @ 937-651-6197.

### **Categories of Local Health Alert Network messages:**

**Health Alert** Requires immediate action or attention; highest level of importance

**Health Advisory** May not require immediate action; provides important information for a specific incident or situation

**Health Update** Unlikely to require immediate action; provides updated information regarding an incident or situation

**HAN Info Service** Does not require immediate action; provides general public health information