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Hepatitis A Case Identified in Dexter, Missouri

DECEMBER 15TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Hepatitis A Case Identified in Dexter, Missouri

Stoddard County, Missouri - A case of Hepatitis A has been identified in a food handler that worked while potentially contagious at Huddle House in Dexter, Missouri. The restaurant, in conjunction with the Department of Health and Senior Services and Stoddard County Health Center, is investigating and has taken necessary control measures to decrease the risk of spreading the illness.

Members of the public who ate at the Dexter, Missouri, Huddle House between **November 21, 2017 and December 2, 2017** should watch for symptoms of Hepatitis A and seek medical care if they have symptoms. Symptoms usually develop between two and seven weeks after exposure and can include:

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Dark urine
- Clay-colored stools
- Joint pain
- Jaundice (yellow skin and eyes)

Vaccine and Immune Globulin (IG) for those Exposed to Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is a vaccine-preventable disease. If given within two weeks of exposure, according to the specific CDC guidelines, prophylaxis vaccine or immune globulin (IG) can prevent illness. With concurrent outbreaks occurring across the nation, vaccine and IG are in limited supply. Therefore, use of these prevention strategies must be restricted to those at highest risk for illness or complications, such as close personal contacts. It is important to note that receiving a Hepatitis A vaccine or IG more than 2 weeks after a known exposure may not prevent illness.

Disease Information

Hepatitis A is a virus that infects the liver. Most people who get Hepatitis A feel sick for several weeks, but they usually recover completely and do not have lasting liver damage. In rare cases, Hepatitis A can cause liver failure and death; this is more common in people older than 50 and in people with other liver diseases.

Prevention

Hepatitis A is spread when a person swallows the virus present on objects or in food or drinks contaminated by tiny amounts of stool from an infected person. Good hand washing practices are critical for preventing the spread of Hepatitis A. Washing hands after going to the bathroom and changing diapers and before preparing or eating food will help keep the virus from spreading to uninfected people. If you are concerned that you are at high risk of exposure, the best way to keep from getting sick from Hepatitis A is to get vaccinated. The Hepatitis A vaccine is highly effective when administered properly.

For more information about Hepatitis A, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav/afaq.htm>.

Members of the public or providers with patients who are concerned about a potential exposure can call the Stoddard County Health Center at 573-568-4593.

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