



Disease Control and Epidemiology

Hepatitis A Cases in Orange County Residents Without a History of Travel

June 13, 2017

Three cases of hepatitis A virus (HAV) infection have been diagnosed in Orange County residents in the last month. The cases are adult males aged 32-57, none with a history of travel or other apparent hepatitis A exposure. Illness onset dates ranged from May 2 to May 26. A common source for these infections has not been identified; Orange County Public Health is investigating the situation.

15-25 cases of hepatitis A infection have been reported annually in Orange County from 2011-16, the vast majority following exposure either during international travel or to a known case of hepatitis A.

Of note, San Diego County has had 160 cases of hepatitis A, including 4 deaths, reported since early 2017, primarily in homeless and/or illicit drug user populations. None of the recently-identified Orange County cases have a history of these risk factors or connection to San Diego's outbreak, but it is possible that our County may have cases of hepatitis A associated with this event. Additional information on the San Diego outbreak can be found at:

http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/community_epidemiology/dc/Hepatitis_A.html.

The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) also recently announced a national recall of frozen tuna potentially contaminated with hepatitis A which was served in several restaurants in Southern California, including Orange County. No cases of hepatitis A have been identified thus far in association with this event in Orange County or elsewhere. The complete recall advisory can be found at:

<https://www.fda.gov/Food/RecallsOutbreaksEmergencies/Outbreaks/ucm561199.htm>.

Recommendations

- Consider hepatitis A virus (HAV) infection in persons with signs and/or symptoms of hepatitis, particularly in those who report a history of homelessness and/or IVDU. Hepatitis A signs and symptoms include jaundice, dark urine, fever, malaise, anorexia, nausea, diarrhea, and abdominal discomfort, and increased transaminases (AST/ALT). The incubation period for HAV infection ranges from 15–50 days.
- Send serum for HAV IgM testing in all suspect hepatitis A patients.
- **Report any suspect or confirmed hepatitis A patients promptly to Orange County Public Health Epidemiology by phone at 714-834-8180 or by fax at 714-834-8196.**
- Advise any suspect or confirmed hepatitis A patients to refrain from food preparation for others and stay home from work if in a sensitive occupation (food service, health care, or child care) for at least one week after jaundice onset or symptom onset (if no jaundice), whichever is later. Public Health will advise persons in sensitive occupations when they can return to work.
- Administer post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) to susceptible (non-immune)* close personal contacts, including household and sexual contacts, of persons with hepatitis A as soon as possible within two weeks of the last exposure to the case. See the next page for more information about PEP.

* Immunity against hepatitis A includes history of previous hepatitis A infection, hepatitis A vaccination (at least one dose of single-antigen HAV vaccine), or testing IgG anti-HAV positive.

For more information on hepatitis A postexposure prophylaxis, see

https://archive.cdph.ca.gov/programs/immunize/Documents/CDPH_HAV%20PEP%20Clinical%20Guidance.pdf.