



Disease Control and Epidemiology

Hepatitis A Case in Orange County Related to San Diego Outbreak

July 26, 2017

An Orange County resident has developed hepatitis A virus (HAV) infection after spending time in San Diego during the apparent exposure period. The case has a history of homelessness, but no history of staying at Orange County homeless shelters, and no known exposure to homeless populations here. However, with the ongoing San Diego and Santa Cruz outbreaks, additional cases such as this are likely to occur.

San Diego County has had 275 cases of HAV, with 71% hospitalized and 7 deaths, reported since early 2017, primarily in homeless and/or illicit drug user populations. Santa Cruz County has also reported 38 cases of HAV since April, with disease centered in risk groups that are similar to the San Diego outbreak.

Fifteen to 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 HAV infection. However, since the beginning of May 2017, five cases of HAV infection (including the case described) have been diagnosed in Orange County residents with no history of travel or other apparent HAV exposure. The cases are all adult males with an age range of 32-57. Illness onset dates ranged from May 2 to July 7. These cases have no known exposure to homeless populations or history of illicit drug use, but a common source has not been identified.

Recommendations:

- **In response to the San Diego and Santa Cruz outbreaks, the California Department of Public Health recommends that California providers offer HAV vaccine to persons who are homeless or might be using illicit injection or noninjection drugs.**
- Any homeless person who is one year of age or older should receive two doses of hepatitis A vaccine separated by 6 to 18 months. The first dose should protect most healthy persons.
- Report any suspect or confirmed HAV-infected patients promptly to Orange County Public Health Epidemiology by phone at 714-834-8180 or by fax at 714-564-4050.
- Hepatitis A vaccination is also routinely recommended for all children at one year of age, as well as persons with high risk conditions or behaviors including:
 - Persons with chronic liver disease, including those with hepatitis B or C virus (HBV or HCV) infection
 - Users of injection and noninjection illicit drugs
 - Men who have sex with men
 - Persons traveling to or working in countries that have high or intermediate levels of HAV transmission
 - Any person wishing to obtain immunity to HAV
 - Persons who have been exposed to HAV in the prior 2 weeks and are not known to be immune (immune globulin is an alternative to vaccine or given in addition to vaccine in some instances).
- The first dose of single-antigen HAV vaccine appears to provide protection to more people than the first dose of the combined HAV/HBV (Twinrix®) vaccine. This apparent advantage disappears when the respective series are completed. The California Department of Public Health recommends that providers consider the short-term risks of exposure to HAV, the likelihood of follow-up to complete multidose

immunization and the need for protection from HBV when selecting vaccines for those at risk. Immunization against HAV with existing supplies should not be delayed to obtain a different formulation of vaccine.

- Consider HAV infection in persons with signs and/or symptoms of hepatitis, particularly in those who report a history of homelessness and/or IVU. HAV infection 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.
- 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 last exposure to the case.

For more information on hepatitis A postexposure prophylaxis, see

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

California Department of Public Health recommendations can be found at:

https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Immunization/HAV_Outbreak_Provider%20Guidance2017July14.pdf

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.

Additional information on Santa Cruz County's outbreak can be found at:

<http://santacruzhealth.org/HSAHome/HealthAlerts.aspx>.

For more information on hepatitis A, see <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav/havfaq.htm>.

Contact Information

For questions or concerns please contact the **Epidemiology and Assessment Program at 714-834-8180**.