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PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

To: Medical Providers, Clinicians, Hospitalists, Health Care Facilities, Physician Practices, Corrections and Veteran Agencies, School Health Care, Emergency Services

From: Dr. Nirav Shah, Maine CDC Director

Subject: Acute Hepatitis A Case in a Food Service Worker in Rockwood, Maine

Date / Time: Wednesday, September 30, 2020 at 5:10pm

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Priority: High

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ACUTE HEPATITIS A CASE IN A FOOD SERVICE WORKER IN ROCKWOOD, MAINE

The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) has identified a case of acute hepatitis A virus infection in a Rockwood, Maine, food service worker. The case handled food while infectious from September 2, 2020, through September 22, 2020.

Epidemiological assessment of the employee's illness determined that restaurant patrons may be at risk for hepatitis A infection. Maine CDC is recommending that anyone who may have eaten food prepared at or worked at The Birches Resort Restaurant in Rockwood on September 16, 2020, through September 22, 2020, receive hepatitis A vaccine within 14 days of their potential exposure as there is a 14-day window during which prophylaxis is effective after exposure. This recommendation includes anyone who may have had dine-in, take-out, delivery, or curbside pickup of food from the restaurant. Anyone who visited the restaurant from September 2, 2020 through September 15, 2020, is outside the window for which prophylaxis is recommended, but are advised to watch for symptoms and seek medical attention should they develop symptoms. Health care providers are encouraged to remain vigilant for hepatitis A infection in persons with consistent symptoms and should ask individuals with such symptoms about consumption of food from this establishment during this period.

Background:

Hepatitis A virus is transmitted by the fecal-oral route, commonly through consumption of contaminated food or water. Persons will begin to exhibit symptoms 15-50 days after exposure to the virus. A person is considered infectious approximately two weeks prior to symptom onset until one week after onset of symptoms.

Exposed persons can receive post-exposure prophylaxis up to 14 days from exposure, after which, the treatment is no longer effective. Prophylaxis includes hepatitis A vaccine. Immunocompromised individuals or children under 12 months old should consult their health care providers about receiving hepatitis A immune globulin (IG).

Recommendations:

Health care providers should consider testing for hepatitis A if patients present with any of the following symptoms: Fever, jaundice, nausea, clay colored stool, dark urine, malaise, abdominal discomfort, anorexia, or vomiting.

Testing includes an acute hepatitis panel (should include hepatitis A IgM) and liver enzymes. Health care providers should review their patients' vaccine records and offer hepatitis A vaccine to those who are eligible.

Reporting:

All cases of suspected and confirmed hepatitis A infection should be reported by phone to the 24/7 disease reporting and consultation line at 1-800-821-5821.

For More Information:

- Maine CDC Hepatitis website <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/hepatitis>
- Federal CDC's Hepatitis A website <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/HAV/index.htm>
- ACIP Hepatitis A vaccine recommendations: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/vacc-specific/hepa.html>