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PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

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

From: Dr. Siiri Bennett, State Epidemiologist

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

Date / Time: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 at 3:50PM

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Priority: **High**

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

The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) has identified a case of acute hepatitis A virus infection in an Orono, Maine, food service worker. The individual handled food while infectious on the following dates: March 6-9, March 13-16, and March 20-21, 2021.

Epidemiological assessment of the employee's illness determined that patrons of the establishment may be at risk for hepatitis A infection. Maine CDC recommends that anyone who ate food prepared at or who worked at the Circle K at 2 Stillwater Avenue in Orono, Maine, from March 13 through 16 and March 20 through 21 receive hepatitis A vaccine within 14 days of their potential exposure. There is a 14-day window during which prophylaxis is effective after exposure.

Anyone who ate food prepared at or who worked at this establishment from March 6 through 9, 2021, is outside the window for which prophylaxis is recommended. Such individuals are advised to watch for symptoms and seek medical attention should they develop symptoms (see below). 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 or working at this establishment during this period.

Background:

Hepatitis A virus is transmitted by the fecal-oral route, typically through consumption of contaminated food or water. Persons may 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 with hepatitis A vaccine up to 14 days from exposure. 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 should include an acute hepatitis panel (specifically including 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>
- US CDC 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>