



Sweetwater Union High School District

Office of Equity, Culture, and Support Services

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Hepatitis A Virus Update

On September 1, 2017, the San Diego County Public Health Officer declared a local public health emergency due to the ongoing Hepatitis A virus (HAV) outbreak in the county. The County Board of Supervisors ratified this declaration on September 6, 2017 and again on September 12, 2017. Please note that the declaration will be ratified every two weeks, by the County Board of Supervisors, until it is fully rescinded.

A large majority of those who have contracted Hepatitis A are individuals who are homeless or illicit drug users, although some exceptions have been noted. In San Diego County, the virus has typically been spread through person-to-person contact within a fecally contaminated environment. San Diego County officials report that no common sources of food, beverage, or drugs have been identified that have contributed to this outbreak, although the investigation is ongoing. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) notes that person-to-person transmission through close contact is the primary way people get Hepatitis A in the United States.

Although no known cases of Hepatitis A have been reported in our district, attached is a “Fact Sheet” which provides relevant guidance and information. Please review this Fact Sheet carefully and feel free to place on your respective websites to provide additional information for your students, families, and community stakeholders.

Take good care and if there are questions, please contact our offices.



EQUITY, CULTURE, AND SUPPORT SERVICES
Student Support Services

FACT SHEET ON HEPATITIS A

What is Hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a highly contagious infection caused by the Hepatitis A virus. It can range in severity from mild illness lasting a few weeks to a severe illness lasting several months.

What are the signs and symptoms of Hepatitis A?

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Loss of Appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal Pain
- Dark Urine
- Gray-colored Stools
- Joint Pain
- Jaundice

How does this virus spread?

- Hepatitis A is usually spread when a person ingests fecal matter – even in microscopic amounts – from contact with objects, food, or drinks contaminated by feces or stool from an infected person
- Hepatitis A can be spread when:
 - An infected person does not wash his/her hands properly after going to the bathroom and then touches objects or food.
 - A caregiver does not properly wash his or her hands after changing diapers or cleaning up the stool of an infected person.

Can Hepatitis A be prevented?

- Yes. The best way to prevent Hepatitis A is by getting vaccinated. The Hepatitis A vaccine is recommended for all children, and people with certain risk factors and medical conditions.
- The Hepatitis A vaccine is safe and effective and given as two shots, 6 months apart. Both shots are needed for long-term protection.

How can you reduce your risk of spreading or catching the Hepatitis A virus?

- Always wash your hands thoroughly after using the restroom and when you come in contact with an infected person's blood, stools or other bodily fluid.
 - The CDC recommends washing your hands often with soap and water for a total of 20 seconds each time.
- Avoid unclean food and water.

Who should get the Hepatitis A vaccine?

- Travelers to countries with high or medium rates of Hepatitis A virus
- Users of injection and non-injection illegal drugs
- Individuals with chronic liver disease, such as cirrhosis, hepatitis B, or hepatitis C.

- Individuals who are homeless.
- Persons with clotting factor disorders.
- Individuals who are homeless.
- Individuals who work with homeless and/or users of illegal drugs.
- Food handlers
- Anyone who is concerned about Hepatitis A exposure and wants to be immune.

Note: Individuals with chronic liver disease (i.e., cirrhosis and hepatitis C) may not be at increased risk of getting Hepatitis A virus infections but are at increased risk of having poor outcomes if they are infected with Hepatitis A virus.

For more information, visit the County of San Diego's Health & Human Services Department website at:

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