



SAN BENITO COUNTY

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

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PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES
Healthy People in Healthy Communities

County and City Officials Work Together to Prevent a Local Hepatitis A Outbreak Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
14 November 2017

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SAN BENITO COUNTY, CA. California continues to experience an increase in cases of hepatitis A infection. As of October 20, 2017, there are 610 probable and/or confirmed cases of hepatitis A throughout California and 19 deaths.

Although San Benito County has no confirmed cases of hepatitis A, out of an abundance of caution, health officials are working closely with city officials to conduct prevention and control measures including: providing hepatitis A vaccine to at-risk individuals, including persons experiencing homelessness and/or illicit drug users, providing vaccine to city and county employees who interface with high-risk populations, and installing portable toilet and hand-washing stations in locations most accessible for high-risk populations. The locations of these stations are behind City Hall on Fifth Street, and East and Third Streets.

The hepatitis A virus can spread person to person through contaminated food, water or objects. The virus can also spread by having sexual contact or sharing drugs with someone who is infected. Those most at risk include: travelers to areas with high or intermediate rates of endemic hepatitis A; men who have sex with men; users of injection and non-injection illegal drugs; persons with clotting factor disorders; household members or caregivers of persons infected with hepatitis A, and persons experiencing homelessness.

Symptoms of hepatitis A include: jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes), fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, and light-colored stools. Symptoms usually appear over a number of days and last less than two months. However, some people can be ill for as long as six months. Hepatitis A can sometimes cause liver failure and even death.

To prevent the spread of hepatitis A infection: get the hepatitis A vaccination; wash your hands with soap and water frequently, especially after using the bathroom or changing diapers, and before handling food. Do not have sex with someone who has a hepatitis A infection; use your own towels, toothbrushes and eating utensils; and don't share food, drinks, or smokes with other people.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES
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HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAMS
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Individuals are recommended to check their hepatitis A vaccination status and talk to their health care providers about the risks for hepatitis A. Persons planning an international trip should check the CDC Travelers' Health website (<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>) to see if hepatitis A vaccination is recommended for the intended destinations.

Hepatitis A vaccine is available at many doctors' offices and clinics and at some retail pharmacies. For persons without health insurance, vaccine is available at San Benito County Public Health Services. For additional information please call (831) 637-5367 or go to our website at <http://hhsa.cosb.us/publichealth>.

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