



Hepatitis A vaccination continues to be urged for high risk groups

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For Immediate Release



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LANSING, Mich. – It's been more than two years since public health officials began battling a hepatitis A outbreak in Michigan, and as of Nov. 7 the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is reporting 905 cases. In comparison, the state recorded 327 cases 2011-2015.

Although weekly counts have slowed from 15-20 cases per week to about three cases a week, numbers are still above average and public health officials continue to urge vaccination. This outbreak continues to have a high hospitalization rate, with 726 people hospitalized (80.2 percent) and 28 deaths.

"Our local health department partners have been instrumental in slowing this epidemic through outreach efforts and vaccination clinics targeted towards high risk individuals," said Dr. Eden Wells, MDHHS chief medical executive. "With vaccine available, all residents are encouraged to discuss their risk factors with their doctor or local health department."

Those with a history of injection and non-injection drug use, homelessness or transient housing, incarceration and men who have sex with men (MSM) are thought to be at greater risk of contracting the disease

“This has been the largest person-to-person hepatitis A outbreak in Michigan’s history,” Wells said. “It’s imperative that Michigan residents get vaccinated to protect themselves and prevent the further spread of this outbreak in Michigan communities. Talk to your health care provider to see if you are at risk of getting hepatitis A.”

Getting vaccinated, practicing good hand washing and avoiding sex with infected partners are ways to prevent getting infected. The hepatitis A vaccine is available at local pharmacies, through healthcare providers and at local health departments.

Vaccination clinics have been held at local health departments, homeless shelters and venues popular with the MSM population in an effort to go where these populations are likely to be present. More than 268,000 doses of vaccine have been administered in outbreak jurisdictions. In addition, emergency departments have been screening for hepatitis A and offering vaccination.

Hepatitis A is a serious, highly contagious liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV). HAV is found in the feces (poop) of people with hepatitis A and spread by eating contaminated food or water, during sex or by living with an infected person.

Hepatitis A symptoms can include:

- Nausea and vomiting
- Belly pain
- Feeling tired
- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Yellowing of the skin and eyes
- Dark urine
- Pale-colored feces (poop)
- Joint pain

For more information about hepatitis A, including a [calendar of vaccination clinics](#), visit Michigan.gov/hepatitisAoutbreak.
