



Date: September 25, 2017

To: Patrick H. West, City Manager *P.H.W.*

From: Kelly Colopy, Director, Department of Health and Human Services *KC*

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: Hepatitis A Outbreak in Los Angeles County

On September 19, 2017, Los Angeles County reported a local outbreak of Hepatitis A. Outbreaks have also been reported in San Diego, where there have been more than 420 cases since early this year, and in Santa Cruz County, where there have been 69 Hepatitis A cases since April. Currently, 10 cases have been reported in Los Angeles County, 8 of which are directly linked to the San Diego or Santa Cruz outbreaks. Two of the Los Angeles County cases were identified as being locally acquired. The outbreaks are associated with persons who are homeless and/or use illicit drugs. To date, a common source of food, beverage, or other cause has not been identified. **There are currently no local cases in the Long Beach and no outbreak has been declared in the City;** however, we could see cases in the future due to the proximity to the ongoing outbreak.

Given the outbreaks in surrounding jurisdictions, we are receiving many calls regarding next steps in Long Beach. In response, the Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services provides the following information regarding Hepatitis A and the City's prevention and response plan to such outbreaks.

Hepatitis A is a disease affecting the liver that is transmitted by the fecal-oral route, meaning the virus is ingested by mouth from contact with hands, objects, food, drinks, or surfaces that are contaminated by the feces of an infected person. Common symptoms include fever, malaise, jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes), weight loss, vomiting, dark urine, clay-colored stool, and joint pain. It can take anywhere from 15 to 50 days after someone has been exposed for their symptoms to appear. Hepatitis A is usually self-limiting, meaning that people usually get better on their own. There is a two-dose vaccine available that is extremely effective – just one shot will provide up to 95 percent protection, and two shots will offer nearly 100 percent protection.

As we currently do not have any cases of outbreak-related Hepatitis A in Long Beach, our main message is to practice general disease prevention measures – primarily by washing hands with soap and water often. Gloves should also be used if working in an area that may have fecal contamination, but hands should be washed after removing the gloves. Hepatitis A virus is difficult to inactivate, and can live on surfaces for long periods of time. Waterless hand sanitizers are not effective, which is why hand washing is so important. Disinfection of Hepatitis A on potentially contaminated surfaces can be done using a bleach solution. See the attachment for more details on best practices for disinfection.

Long Beach Response

To prepare for a potential Hepatitis A outbreak in Long Beach, the Health Department has completed the following:

- Developed a Hepatitis A Response Plan, based on both preparedness and outbreak phases;
- Scheduled three Hepatitis A vaccination clinics for homeless populations the week of September 25th throughout Long Beach (400 vaccines ordered and can access additional doses);
- Developed Hepatitis A FAQ, disinfection guidance, posters, and other outreach materials, which the Multi-Service Center and their partners have been distributing;
- Developed a website for Hepatitis A with information and a hotline number for the public to contact if concerned;
- Held an in-person training on Hepatitis A for staff and community partners who work exclusively with the homeless population; and
- Ordered hygiene kits that will be assembled and distributed to homeless populations.

Additionally, the Health Department's Hepatitis A Response Plan accounts for sanitation in two phases:

1. Prevention phase (no cases reported in LB): We are currently working with community partners to determine cost, logistics, and dissemination of mobile hand hygiene stations to place in areas that may not have access to running water, such as homeless encampments. In addition, we are working with neighboring jurisdictions to determine best practices for street cleaning with bleach solution in certain areas to remove any Hepatitis A from at-risk areas.
2. Outbreak phase (2 or more cases reported in LB): We will likely disseminate hand hygiene stations and conduct street cleaning in most at-risk areas.

Employees: The Health Department's Hepatitis A Response Plan accounts for protection of City employees in two phases:

1. Prevention phase (no cases reported in LB): We recommend that employees practice good hand hygiene. If employees are interested in obtaining the Hepatitis A vaccine, they are encouraged to contact their health care provider. For those who are uninsured, the Health Department's Immunization Clinic offers Hepatitis A vaccine as well.
2. Outbreak phase (2 or more cases reported in LB): The Health Department, Department Directors, and Human Resources (Safety Office and Occupational Health) will work together to identify staff with the most extensive contact with individuals who are homeless and/or illicit drug users. Occupational Health will offer immunizations to those who are identified.

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For any questions regarding Hepatitis A, please contact the Public Health Emergency Management Hotline at (562) 570-7907.

Attachments

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