Protecting our Homeless Residents at Risk of Hepatitis A Infection

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Agenda

• Hepatitis & hepatitis A
• Current outbreak
• How is hepatitis A spread and what can we do to prevent an outbreak
  • Identifying those at risk
  • Educate yourself, your co-workers, and your clients
  • Refer to medical care for evaluation and/or vaccination
  • Best strategies for preventing spread
• Special considerations for homeless clients
• Review
What is Hepatitis?

“Hepatitis” means inflammation of the liver

Caused by alcohol, infection, toxins, medications and medical conditions

Can be temporary (acute) or long term (chronic) if it lasts >6 months
Current Hepatitis A Outbreak in California

- 565 cases in 5 CA counties and 2 other western states (current as of 9/19/17)
- Past outbreaks in similar populations have been very difficult to stop. Your work is key to preventing an outbreak.
Who is at Higher Risk?

- Travelers to certain countries
- Men who have sex with men
- Illicit drug users
- Homeless persons
- People who work with high risk populations: You!
How does **Hepatitis A** Spread?

Ingestion of fecal matter, even in microscopic amounts from:

- Touching objects or eating food handled by an infected person
- Close person-to-person contact with an infected person
- Sharing/use of recreational drugs (not just IVDU) with an infected person
- Sexual contact with an infected person
People who are contagious usually do not know that they have an infection.

Infectious Period:
- Two weeks before symptoms/jaundice
- One week after Sx/jaundice
What do we tell our clients?

Get vaccinated!!!

Wash hands!!!

If they think they have been exposed to a case or have symptoms...
- See your doctor or visit closest ER
- Wash your hands with soap and water after using the bathroom and before eating
- Do not prepare or handle food for others
- Do not share food, drinks, or drugs with anyone
What are the Symptoms?

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Loss of appetite
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes)
- Stomach pain
- Vomiting
- Dark urine, pale stools, and diarrhea
Jaundice
What are the Symptoms?

Not everyone develops symptoms

Symptoms start 2-6 weeks after being exposed/infected, most commonly at about 4 weeks

Symptoms usually last less than 2 months but can last up to 6 months
Don’t Spread Hepatitis A

Don’t **prepare** food for other people
Don’t **handle** food for other people
Don’t **serve** food to other people
Don’t share **food** with others
Don’t share **drinks** with others
Don’t share **smokes/drugs** with others
Don’t Spread Hepatitis A

Best Practices for Handwashing:
- Use running water
- Use soap
- Scrub for at least 20 seconds

When to wash your hands:
- After using the bathroom
- After helping someone use the bathroom
- After changing a diaper
- Before touching or preparing food
Other steps to prevent the spread of Hepatitis A

- Use your own toothbrush and razor
- Use your own eating utensils
- Use your own towel
- Promote vaccination of your peers
- Cleaning/disinfection of group facilities*

Special Concerns for the Homeless

- Lack of adequate facilities
- Barriers to accessing services
- Comorbidities
- Transportation
- Children
- Sharing
- Communication
- Challenges to assessment
Review

• Hepatitis A is a potentially severe and easily transmitted illness
• There is currently a Hep A outbreak in California primarily effecting homeless and drug using populations
• Homeless and IV drug users are at increased risk of the most severe illness and death from Hep A
• Hepatitis may be asymptomatic but more commonly presents as:
  - Jaundice
  - Fatigue
  - Stomach pain
  - Fever
  - Nausea
  - Vomiting
  - Diarrhea
  - Dark urine / pale stools
  - Loss of appetite

• What can be done to prevent the spread in Alameda County:
  • Get vaccinated against Hepatitis A
  • Wash hands with soap and water
  • Know the symptoms and seek medical care and diagnosis if exposed or showing symptoms
Review

• If someone is diagnosed with Hepatitis A:
  • Don’t prepare, handle, or serve food, drinks, or drugs for others
  • Don’t share food, drinks, or drugs with others
  • They are contagious from about two weeks before symptoms started to about one week after jaundice/symptoms start and may have exposed others who should be vaccinated ASAP
  • Answer phone calls from providers and Public Health if they call

• Your work is crucial to preventing an outbreak of Hepatitis A in Alameda County
• You need to be vaccinated to do your work safely and effectively
• Get vaccinated and promote vaccination of those that you meet
QUESTIONS
Herd Immunity: How It Works

- Percent Vaccinated: 0%
- Percent Vaccinated: 25%
- Percent Vaccinated: 50%
- Percent Vaccinated: 75%
- Percent Vaccinated: 90%
- Percent Vaccinated: 95%

- Infected
- Unvaccinated
- Vaccinated