

# HEPATITIS A

## Stopping Its Spread



### PA is experiencing an outbreak of hepatitis A.

- Hepatitis A is a highly contagious, vaccine preventable infection caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV). It is spread via fecal-oral route, and is clinically indistinguishable from infections caused by hepatitis B or hepatitis C viruses. The incubation period for hepatitis A is long, between 15 and 50 days. The average length of time between exposure and symptom onset is 28 days.
- Large nationwide outbreaks have caused over 8,000 hospitalizations and 236 deaths.
- There is an upward trend in outbreak-associated cases of hepatitis A in Southeastern Pennsylvania.

### Signs and Symptoms



Nausea, vomiting, and abdominal pain



Jaundice, dark urine, and pale stools



Fever, fatigue, anorexia, and malaise

### High-Risk Groups

These populations should be prioritized for vaccination efforts, and include:



Persons who use injection and/or non-injection drugs



Men who have sex with men (MSM)



Persons experiencing homelessness or unstable housing

### Prevention Measures



Practice hand hygiene frequently using soap and water



Adhere to standard precautions in healthcare facilities



Screen and vaccinate individuals in high risk groups

### DID YOU KNOW?

Hand sanitizer may not be effective against HAV. Washing hands with soap and water is the preferred way to keep hands free of HAV.



### STOPPING THE SPREAD

Healthcare providers in Chester County play a major role in halting the spread of infectious disease, including HAV. By screening, vaccinating, and educating patients, you can put the brakes on the spread of HAV in our community.

### Screening

These groups are at highest risk of HAV infection or developing serious complications:

1. People who use drugs (injection and non-injection).
2. Men who have sex with men.
3. Those experiencing homelessness and/or unstable housing.
4. People who are, or were recently, incarcerated.
5. People with chronic liver disease.

### Vaccination to Control an Outbreak

Certain individuals qualify for no cost vaccine at the Health Department. Call for more information about the vaccine program at 610-344-6252.

### Routine Vaccination

All individuals at risk for hepatitis A are recommended to get vaccinated, including:

- Children, who are routinely vaccinated between their first and second birthdays.
- Persons traveling to, or working in, countries with high or intermediate rates of hepatitis A.
- Persons who have occupational risk for infection.
- Persons who have chronic liver disease.
- Persons who have clotting-factor disorders.
- Household members and other close personal contacts of adopted children newly arriving from countries with high or intermediate rates of hepatitis A.
- Persons with direct contact with persons who have hepatitis A.