



Public Health Update
Increase of Hepatitis A Virus (HAV)
Infections in Clark County, Nevada
February 1, 2019

Situation

Since March 2017, CDC's Division of Viral Hepatitis (DVH) has been assisting several state and local health departments with hepatitis A outbreaks. In Clark County, we have seen an increase of hepatitis A cases. There were 38 confirmed acute hepatitis A cases reported in 2018 vs. 13 cases reported in 2017 and 12 cases reported in 2016. Of the total cases reported in 2018, 53% were injection and/or non-injection drug users, compared to 39% who were not using drugs and 8% unknown. Additionally, 16 % of the total cases reported in 2018, were homeless.

Hepatitis A is a highly contagious liver infection caused by the hepatitis A virus. Symptoms include fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, clay-colored bowel movements, joint pain, and jaundice. The primary means of hepatitis A virus (HAV) transmission in the United States is typically person-to-person through the fecal-oral route (i.e., ingestion of something that has been contaminated with the feces of an infected person). Person-to-person transmission of HAV between persons who report drug use and/or homelessness could result from contaminated needles and other injection paraphernalia, specific sexual contact and practices, or from generally poor sanitary conditions. Hepatitis A is not a chronic infection. Once a person recovers from the infection, antibodies are developed to prevent it from occurring again.

According to CDC, attributes of communities at risk for unrecognized clusters of hepatitis A infection may include the following:

- Recent increases in the:
 - Number of hepatitis A infections in persons who report drug use;
 - Number of hepatitis A infections in persons who report homelessness;
 - Number of hepatitis A infections in men who have sex with men; and
 - Number of hepatitis A infections in persons who report recent incarceration.
- High rates of drug use, drug-related overdose, drug treatment admission, or drug arrests.
- High rates of homelessness.

Recommendations for Healthcare Providers

Vaccination recommendations

The best way to prevent hepatitis A infection is through vaccination with the hepatitis A vaccine. CDC recommends the following groups be vaccinated against hepatitis A:

- All children at 1 year of age
- Persons who are at increased risk for infection:
 1. Persons traveling to or working in countries that have high or intermediate endemicity of hepatitis A;
 2. Men who have sex with men;
 3. Persons who use injection and non-injection drugs;
 4. Persons who have occupational risk for infection;
 5. Persons who have chronic liver disease;
 6. Persons who have clotting-factor disorders;
 7. Household members and other close personal contacts or adopted children newly arriving from countries with high or intermediate hepatitis A endemicity; and
 8. Persons with direct contact with persons who have hepatitis A.
- Persons who are at increased risk for complications from hepatitis A, including people with chronic liver diseases, such as hepatitis B or hepatitis C.
- Any person wishing to obtain immunity.

How to report hepatitis A cases to SNHD

There are two ways to report a hepatitis A case:

1. Report online by completing the Online Provider Disease Reporting Form at <https://www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/diseasereports/forms/disease-reporting> (Recommended).
2. Complete and fax the State of Nevada Confidential Morbidity Report Form to (702) 759-1414.

Where to receive hepatitis A vaccines

Hepatitis A is a series of two doses given 6 months apart. To receive a hepatitis A vaccine, contact your doctor or the Southern Nevada Health District at (702) 759-0850. Locations for SNHD Immunization Clinics and Immunization Mobile Clinic can be found at <https://www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/clinic/immunization-clinic/clinic-locations/>.

If you have any questions on hepatitis A or hepatitis A surveillance, please contact OEDS at (702) 759-1300.



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Southern Nevada Health District

Attachment: State of Nevada Confidential Morbidity Report Form

References:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Outbreak of Hepatitis A Virus (HAV) Infections among Persons Who Use Drugs and Persons Experiencing Homelessness.
<https://emergency.cdc.gov/han/han00412.asp>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Hepatitis A Questions and Answers for the Public.
<https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav/afaq.htm>

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action

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