

April 25, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) and several local health departments are investigating increasing hepatitis A activity in southern Indiana counties. Since January 1, 2018, 92 confirmed cases have been identified, compared to an average of 20 cases statewide each year. Hepatitis A case investigations have identified common risk factors including: homelessness and/or illicit drug use, travel to Louisville and other communities experiencing outbreaks, or contact with people who recently traveled to a community experiencing an outbreak. You are receiving this letter because you have been identified as a facility that provides services to individuals that may have some of the risk factors mentioned above.

Hepatitis A is a viral infection of the liver. Symptoms appear 15-50 days after exposure and may include abdominal pain, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, dark urine, pale (clay-colored) stool, and jaundice (yellowing of skin and eyes). Hepatitis A virus is shed in stool and is spread by contaminated food, beverages, and ice through unwashed hands and person-to-person contact with people who are infected. People who are infected shed the virus for about three weeks before and after symptoms appear.

Persons who are at high risk of becoming infected should get vaccinated. Hepatitis A vaccine can be obtained through healthcare providers, pharmacies, or at the local health department. Those with higher risk for hepatitis A include:

- History of homelessness
- Injection or non-injection illicit drug use
- History of incarceration
- Travel within the past 50 days to states with ongoing outbreaks
- Men who have sex with men
- Direct contact with individuals who have hepatitis A

Cleaning and disinfecting procedures

Chlorine bleach is an effective disinfectant against the hepatitis A virus on most hard surfaces. Mix and use the chlorine solution promptly. Allow 1 minute of contact time and then rinse with water.

For a 5000 parts per million bleach solution: 1 and 2/3 cups bleach to 1 gallon of water. Use for stainless steel, food/mouth contact items, tile floors, nonporous surfaces, counters, sinks and toilets. Prepare fresh solution daily and date.

To determine if a product is effective against hepatitis A, review the product label or product specification sheet and ensure it states “**effective against hepatitis A**” or “**effective against Feline Calicivirus.**”

Additional hepatitis A resources, including disinfection procedures, can be found on the ISDH website located at <https://www.in.gov/isdh/27791.htm>

If you notice an increase of ill persons in your facility, please contact your local health department immediately. The ISDH appreciates your partnership in preventing hepatitis A infection. For questions, please contact the ISDH Epidemiology Resource Center at (317) 233-7125.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicole Stone', written in a cursive style.

Nicole Stone, MPH
Foodborne and Waterborne Disease Epidemiologist