



**TO:** West Virginia Healthcare Providers, Hospitals and Other Healthcare Facilities

**FROM:** Rahul Gupta, MD, MPH, FACP, Commissioner and State Health Officer  
WVDHHR, Bureau for Public Health

**DATE:** 1/13/2017

**LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY HEALTH PROVIDERS, HOSPITAL-BASED PHYSICIANS, INFECTION CONTROL PREVENTIONISTS, LABORATORY DIRECTORS, AND OTHER APPLICABLE PARTNERS

**OTHER RECIPIENTS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO ASSOCIATION MEMBERS, STAFF, ETC.

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health was notified of an incident involving a food handler diagnosed with hepatitis A infection who worked in two restaurants during the infectious period between November 20, 2016 and December 11, 2016. The two restaurants are located in Tucker County, West Virginia (Canaan Valley area). Post exposure prophylaxis was given to the other co-workers/food handlers. In early January 2017, a second case of hepatitis A was identified in West Virginia. This particular case reported eating at one of the restaurants during the food handler's infectious period. The purpose of this alert is to raise awareness and ask for immediate reporting of hepatitis A cases to the local health department. For contact information on local health departments, please visit [www.dhhr.wv.gov/localhealth/pages/map.aspx](http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/localhealth/pages/map.aspx).

Patients with hepatitis A typically present with acute onset of fever, jaundice, dark urine, clay-colored stool, fatigue, anorexia, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhea. Laboratory evaluation should include liver function tests and serological testing for hepatitis A IgM. Hepatitis B surface antigen, hepatitis B core antibody and hepatitis C antibody should also be requested since all forms of acute viral hepatitis are clinically indistinguishable.

Hepatitis A spreads readily among close contact; attack rate is 20% among susceptible household members. Local health departments routinely offer hepatitis A vaccine or immune globulin to close contacts in order to prevent secondary cases. For that reason, providers are encouraged to report suspected and confirmed cases of hepatitis A promptly as required by West Virginia law.

For additional information on hepatitis A, visit [www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/FnW/Viral/Pages/HepA.aspx](http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/FnW/Viral/Pages/HepA.aspx) or [www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav/index.htm). To report cases of viral hepatitis, please contact your local health department or the Office of Epidemiology and Prevention Services, Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology at (304) 558-5358, extension 1 or the answering service at (304) 925-9946.

This message was directly distributed by the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health to local health departments and professional associations. Receiving entities are responsible for further disseminating the information as appropriate to the target audience.

**Categories of Health Alert messages:**

**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.