



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAGINAW COUNTY INCLUDED IN HEPATITIS A OUTBREAK

The Saginaw County Department of Public Health (SCDPH) is releasing that Saginaw County has joined the growing list of counties that are part of the hepatitis A outbreak in Southeast Michigan. As of February 6, 2018, there have been 736 cases of hepatitis A associated with this outbreak, including 24 deaths and 596 hospitalizations. To date, Saginaw County has two confirmed cases of hepatitis A linked to the ongoing outbreak. As the outbreak continues to spread across the state, SCDPH wants to remind residents that the most effective way to prevent hepatitis A is through vaccination and handwashing with soap and water.

Hepatitis A, a vaccine-preventable disease, is an infection of the liver cause by the hepatitis A virus (HAV). HAV is found in feces of people with hepatitis A and is most commonly spread by eating contaminated food or water, during sex, or just by living with an infected person. Symptoms of HAV infection include:

- Nausea and vomiting
- Stomach pain
- Feeling tired
- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Yellowing of the skin and eyes
- Dark urine
- Pale-colored feces
- Joint pain

The SCDPH is working with community stakeholders and the Michigan Department of Health and Humans Service to expand vaccination efforts in Saginaw County, particularly with agencies that service those at highest risk of contracting HAV. High risk individuals include:

- Persons who use injection and non-injection illegal drugs
- Men who have sex with men
- Persons who are currently homeless or in transient living conditions
- Recently incarcerated
- Person with chronic liver disease

SCDPH is currently offering Hepatitis A vaccinations at all health department immunization clinics and people may also check with their healthcare provider to receive the vaccine.

While the Hepatitis A vaccine is recommended as part of the routine childhood vaccination schedule, most adults have not been vaccinated and may be susceptible to HAV. The best way to reduce the risk of getting HAV is to get vaccinated with Hepatitis A vaccine. It is also recommended to wash your hands after going to the bathroom and before preparing meals for yourself and others. Use your own towels, toothbrushes, and eating utensils. Do not have sex with someone who has HAV infection or share food, drinks, drugs, needles, or smokes with other people.

Please speak to your healthcare provider about your risks for HAV infection. Seek medical attention if you develop signs or symptoms of hepatitis A. For more information the **Hepatitis A** page under Hot Topics on our website, www.saginawpublichealth.org, the State of Michigan's hepatitis outbreak page at www.michigan.gov/hepatitisaoutbreak, or call our hotline (989) 758-3828.

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