



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INCREASED OCCURRENCE OF HEPATITIS A PROMPTS CALL FOR VACCINATION AND GOOD HYGIENE

As a result of hepatitis A outbreaks around the State, the Saginaw County Department of Public Health (SCDPH) would like to remind residents that vaccination and proper hand washing are the best defense against hepatitis A.

Saginaw County currently **does not** have any confirmed cases of hepatitis A connected to the outbreaks occurring in Southeast Michigan, however, there is potential of spread across the State. SCDPH is encouraging healthcare providers to maintain a high index of suspicion for hepatitis infection among individuals, to assist in vaccination efforts to protect the public, and to promptly report all suspected cases to SCDPH.

Hepatitis A is a vaccine-preventable, contagious liver disease that often spreads through the ingestion of contaminated food or water or by contact with contaminated objects. While the risk of getting hepatitis A has been identified higher amongst the following groups:

- Persons with a history of substance abuse,
- Persons currently homeless or in transient living,
- Men who have sex with men,
- Persons incarcerated in correctional facilities,
- Food handlers,
- Healthcare workers,
- Persons with underlying liver disease,
- Person who are in close contact with any of the above risk groups,

SCDPH recommends that all individuals be vaccinated against the disease.

Hepatitis A can range from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a serious illness lasting several months. Illness generally occurs two to six weeks after exposure to the hepatitis A virus. Symptoms include fatigue, abdominal pain, yellow skin (jaundice), dark urine, and pale stool. Some people experience no symptoms. Vaccination and thorough hand washing can prevent infection.

The Saginaw County Department of Public Health offers hepatitis A vaccine. For more information on the vaccines and clinic locations, call 989-758-3840 or visit our website at www.saginawpublichealth.org. Be Wise. Be Well.

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