



COUNTY OF ERIE

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

HEALTH ALERT # 331

March 22, 2015

Hepatitis A in a Food Handler at a Local Restaurant: Possible Consumer Exposures

Please distribute to Emergency Departments, Infection Control Departments, Employee Health Services, Infectious Disease Departments, Pediatrics, Director of Nursing, Medical Director, Pharmacy, Laboratory Director and all patient care areas.

SUMMARY

- The Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH) has identified a case of acute hepatitis A virus (HAV) in a food handler at Casa-Di-Pizza restaurant located at 477 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo.
- The food handler worked while infectious from March 1, 2015 through March 19, 2015.
- Persons who consumed food or beverages in the dine-in area or banquet rooms at Casa-Di-Pizza from March 1, 2015 through March 19, 2015 may have been exposed to HAV.
- Persons who consumed food or beverages in the dine-in area or banquet rooms at Casa-Di-Pizza from March 9, 2015 through March 19, 2015 without prior history of HAV vaccination or history of HAV infection may be candidates for post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) with HAV vaccine or immune globulin (see below).
- Persons who consumed food or beverages in the dine-in area or banquet rooms at Casa-Di-Pizza between March 1, 2015 and March 8, 2015 will not benefit PEP and should monitor their health for symptoms of HAV infection.
- Persons who consumed Casa-Di-Pizza take-out food or food or beverages from the bar are not considered to be at risk.
- The ECDOH will be holding PEP clinics for HAV exposed persons on Monday, March 23, 2015 from 12:00 pm (noon) to 8:00 p.m. and Tuesday, March 24, 2015 from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center.
- Providers are encouraged to consider and test patients for HAV who present with jaundice, abdominal pain, fever, nausea, and/or diarrhea and have a history consuming food or beverages in the Casa-Di-Pizza dine-in area or banquet rooms.
- Providers are asked to promptly report suspected and confirmed HAV cases to the ECDOH at (716) 858-7697. Suspected HAV cases in a food worker should be reported *immediately* by phone.

BACKGROUND

A confirmed case of hepatitis A virus (HAV) has been identified in a food handler employed at Casa-Di-Pizza restaurant located at 477 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo. The food handler worked while potentially infectious from March 1, 2015 to March 19, 2015. Because the employee followed good hand hygiene

and food safety practices, the risk of exposure is small. However, the ECDOH, in collaboration with the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) will provide preventative treatment to anyone exposed within the past two weeks.

EPIDEMIOLOGY OF DISEASE

HAV causes liver disease and can affect persons of all ages. When symptoms are present, they usually occur abruptly and can include jaundice, fever, tiredness, loss of appetite, nausea, abdominal discomfort, dark urine and/or diarrhea. Children aged <6 years may not have symptoms or if illness does occur, may be mild. Symptoms usually last less than 2 months; although some persons may be ill for as long as 6 months. The average incubation period for hepatitis A is 28 days, with a range of 15 – 50 days after exposure.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROPHYLAXIS OF EXPOSED PERSONS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends persons who are not protected and are within 14 days of exposure to an infectious case receive a dose of single antigen HAV vaccine or immune globulin (IG). Per the current Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommendations for HAV post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), healthy persons between the ages of 12 months and 40 years can receive single antigen HAV vaccine or IG. For persons over the age of 40 years, IG is preferred; vaccine can be used if IG cannot be obtained. IG should be used for children under the age of 12 months, immune compromised persons, persons who have been diagnosed with chronic liver disease, and persons for whom vaccine is contraindicated. Twinrix, a combination vaccine containing both HAV and Hepatitis B virus antigens, is not recommended for post-exposure prophylaxis.

A clinic to provide PEP for exposed persons has been scheduled for Monday, March 23, 2014 from 12:00 p.m. (noon) to 8:00 p.m., and Tuesday, March 24, 2015 from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center located at 153 Franklin Street, Buffalo, NY 14202. Persons who have been previously vaccinated for HAV or have had the illness in the past are protected from HAV infection. There is no need for further action.

Those persons eligible for PEP vaccination or IG at the ECDOH clinic **must meet ALL of the following requirements:**

1. Consumed food or beverages in the dine-in area or banquet rooms at Casa-Di-Pizza located at 477 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo, NY between March 9th, 2015 and March 19th, 2015,

AND

2. No prior history of HAV immunization or diagnosis of HAV infection.

Persons who consumed Casa-Di-Pizza take-out food or food or beverages from the bar are not considered to be at risk.

DIAGNOSIS

The ECDOH is asking providers to consider HAV infection when evaluating a patient with jaundice with or without abdominal pain, fever, nausea, and/or diarrhea. HAV infection should also be considered for persons without jaundice who present with abdominal pain, fever, nausea, and/or diarrhea and have a history of consuming food or beverages from the dine-in area or banquet rooms of Casa-Di-Pizza between March 1, 2015 and March 19, 2015. Secondary cases could occur from March 16, 2015 (15 days from earliest exposure) to May 8, 2015 (50 days from last day of infectious period).

For symptomatic persons, physicians should order (HAV) serologic tests for (total and immunoglobulin (Ig) M antibody, available commercially). Testing is not recommended for asymptomatic persons. Due to the possibility of false positive results, serologic tests for HAV should not be used to identify infection in

those exposed who consumed the potentially contaminated food or beverage but have no symptoms. However, for exposed patients under the age of 6 with milder symptoms, especially those in daycare or school settings, testing should be considered. Positive anti-HAV IgG and negative IgM anti-HAV indicates past infection or vaccination and immunity.

REPORTING

Providers are asked to immediately report persons presenting with symptoms consistent with HAV to the ECDOH at (716) 858-7697 during normal business hours or 716-961-7898 evenings, weekends and holidays.

ADDITIONAL CONTROL MEASURES

Good personal hygiene including hand washing and proper sanitation can help prevent HAV. HAV outbreaks are relatively uncommon in the United States; however, when they occur, public health efforts are required for their control.

Casa-Di-Pizza has voluntarily discarded all potentially affected food items and has sanitized the restaurant. Customers who ate in the dine-in area of the restaurant or banquet rooms on or prior to March 19, 2015 should dispose of leftover food.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information on hepatitis A virus (HAV) is available on the NYSDOH web site at: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/a/index.htm>

Current Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices HAV vaccination recommendations: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5641a3.htm>

Health Category Definitions:

Health Alert FLASH: conveys the highest level of importance due to a large-scale, catastrophic public health emergency; warrants immediate action or attention

Health Alert Priority: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention to a health problem or situation

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; no immediate action necessary

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