



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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No hepatitis A outbreak in Tuscaloosa County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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As of March 29, 2012, only one case of hepatitis A has been identified in Tuscaloosa County in a single food handler. According to Dr. Donald Williamson, State Health Officer, "At this time, no additional cases have been identified. I want to thank the owner and managers of the McDonald's at 2000 McFarland Blvd. for sending the food handler home as soon as they knew he was sick. Their quick response was the best prevention to protect the community, since the most common way to transmit hepatitis A is person to person."

On Wednesday, March 28, the Tuscaloosa County Health Department vaccinated 260 people. Hepatitis A vaccine is still available at this location through Friday, March 30, for customers who visited McDonald's on March 14, and during breakfast hours on March 16. Tuscaloosa County Health Department is located at 2350 Hargrove Road E. and the phone number is (205) 562-6900.

Customers who visited before March 14 should continue watching for signs and symptoms of hepatitis A infection, which appear 2 to 6 weeks after exposure and commonly include mild fever, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, tiredness, pain in the upper right side of the abdomen, dark urine, light stools and jaundice (yellowness of eyes or skin). The disease varies in severity, from mild cases lasting 2 weeks or less, to more severe, cases lasting 4 to 6 weeks or longer. Persons who become ill should contact their health care provider immediately.

Frequent and thorough handwashing is essential to stopping the spread of any infectious disease, including hepatitis A. Effective handwashing includes use of warm soapy water for 20 seconds and washing the backs of hands, wrists, between fingers, and under fingernails.

Those having questions about hepatitis A may call 1-800-338-3874. The Health Department will continue to monitor the community for additional hepatitis A cases.