

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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NEWS RELEASE

Hepatitis A outbreak

Under investigation in North Alabama

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) is investigating an increase in hepatitis A cases in Jackson County, AL. This outbreak may have spread to surrounding counties. Persons at highest risk for hepatitis A include users of illegal substances, homeless persons, and men with same sex partners. Other persons also may become infected with the hepatitis A virus. There is an effective vaccine to reduce the risk of developing hepatitis A.

“We are in the early stages of this investigation, but we need to make sure everyone knows the importance of getting vaccinated and taking health precautions including good hand-washing,” said Medical Officer Dr. Karen Landers.

Hepatitis A can spread easily among unvaccinated persons if good hand-washing practices are not observed. ADPH emphasizes that individuals who may be experiencing homelessness, using recreational drugs, sharing drugs or drug paraphernalia, having spent time in jail or prison, or men with same sex partners need to be vaccinated against hepatitis A. Other persons may be vaccinated, if they wish.

After being exposed to someone sick with hepatitis A, symptoms may not appear until 15 to 50 days later. Symptoms may include fever, headache, fatigue, low appetite, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, dark urine, or jaundice. If persons are experiencing any of these symptoms, they contact should their healthcare provider and take steps to prevent spreading illness.

To reduce the risk of hepatitis A disease:

- Get vaccinated.
- Wash hands after using the bathroom, before preparing or eating meals, and after touching anything unclean.
- Do not share food, drinks, eating utensils, cigarettes, towels, toothbrushes or drug paraphernalia.

For more information, visit

<http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/immunization/assets/hepatitisaflyer.pdf> or contact the
ADPH Immunization Division at (334) 206-5023 or toll free at 800-469-4599

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County health departments throughout Alabama provide a wide range of confidential and professional services. Call 1-800-545-1098 or contact your local county health department for additional information.

Mission: To promote, protect, and improve the health of individuals and communities in Alabama.

Vision: Assure the health of Alabamians by promoting healthy, safe, prepared, and informed communities.