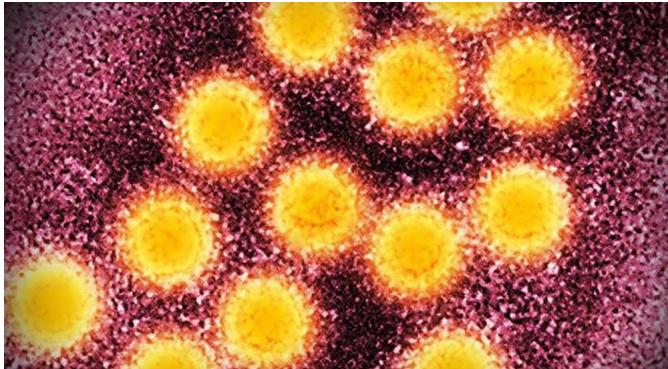


DOH investigates hepatitis A outbreak

Written by Staff Reports

Wednesday, 21 November 2018 13:45



Four acute hepatitis A infections confirmed in Albuquerque area

The New Mexico Department of Health is investigating an outbreak of hepatitis A in Bernalillo County. NMDOH reported Nov. 19 that since the end of October, four acute hepatitis A virus infections have been reported in adults ranging in age from 34-53 years.

Hepatitis A is a contagious liver disease that results from infection with the hepatitis A virus. It can range in severity from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a severe illness lasting several months.

Hepatitis A is usually spread when a person ingests fecal matter, even in microscopic amounts, from contact with objects, food, or drinks contaminated by the feces or stool of an infected person.

The risk of hepatitis A infection is associated with poor sanitation and hygiene and is primarily transmitted through direct contact with an infectious person or contaminated food and drink. The current outbreak has primarily impacted people experiencing homelessness and those who inject drugs.

Hepatitis A infection typically causes fever, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, dark urine, and yellowness of the skin and eyes. Those at increased risk for Hepatitis A include:

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Persons with direct contact with a person who has hepatitis A

Persons who use injection and non-injection drugs

Persons experiencing homelessness or transient housing

Men who have sex with men

To control this outbreak and prevent further spread, NMDOH recommends the vaccination of people in the affected area experiencing homelessness or those who inject drugs.

“Vaccinating people at risk of exposure is the most effective tool we have to prevent the spread of hepatitis A infection during an outbreak,” New Mexico Department of Health Secretary Lynn Gallagher said.

NMDOH is monitoring the outbreak, providing vaccinations, and providing recommendations to reduce the spread of illness. Handwashing, especially after using the bathroom and before preparing food plays an important role in preventing the spread of the virus.

Additionally, DOH is working with community partners to increase awareness and education to help prevent the spread of hepatitis A.

Those at risk and their contacts can be referred to their local public health office for vaccination.

For public health office phone numbers and locations in Bernalillo County please visit the [Public Health Office](#) page.

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