



MID-MICHIGAN DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Your public health team, connecting with our communities to achieve healthier outcomes

Submitted by: Leslie Kinnee, Public Information Officer
615 N. State St., Stanton, MI 48888-9702
989-831-3669, lkinnee@mmdhd.org
www.mmdhd.org



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 02-12-18

Hepatitis A cases confirmed in Clinton and Gratiot counties

Ithaca, Stanton, St. Johns - Michigan is in the midst of a large hepatitis A outbreak. The Mid-Michigan District Health Department, which serves Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm counties, is reporting three confirmed cases of hepatitis A in its district—two in Clinton County and one in Gratiot County.

Hepatitis A is a serious and highly contagious liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus. It is often transmitted through the consumption of food or water contaminated with infected feces or by oral contact with contaminated objects. This outbreak, however, is passing person-to-person through close contact, primarily through drug use, sexual activity and among household members.

Those most at-risk for getting hepatitis A include users of illicit drugs, men who have sex with men, those who are homeless or in transient living situations, those who have been recently incarcerated and those with chronic liver disease.

The disease spreads easily from person-to-person and 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 of hepatitis A include nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, fever, loss of appetite, fatigue, jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes), dark urine, pale stool and diarrhea. Not everyone with hepatitis A will have symptoms, but most do.

Hepatitis A is a vaccine-preventable illness, and while the vaccine is recommended as a part of the routine childhood vaccination schedule, most adults have not been vaccinated. That is why it's so important for those at-risk of contracting the disease to get vaccinated right away.

In addition to getting vaccinated, people can help protect themselves by washing their hands with soap and warm water after using the bathroom or changing diapers and before eating and preparing food.

This outbreak has had a high hospitalization rate. According to Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, of the 736 cases reported since August 2016, a total of 596 have been hospitalized. A total of 24 deaths have been reported.

People who believe they may have been exposed to hepatitis A or who have symptoms should contact their doctor immediately. Those who would like to be vaccinated should contact their doctor or the Mid-Michigan District Health Department at 989-224-2195 in Clinton County, 989-875-3681 in Gratiot County or 989-831-5237 in Montcalm County.

All local health departments involved in the outbreak are receiving financial assistance from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to help combat the disease. The Mid-Michigan District Health Department will use the funds to conduct extra immunization clinics to try to reach those at high risk for the disease.

-more-

2- Clinton County included in hepatitis A outbreak

If your organization is interested in hosting a vaccination clinic, contact the health department at 989-227-3109.

Please visit www.mi.gov/hepatitisAoutbreak for additional information. To see an up-to-date vaccination clinic schedule, visit Mid-Michigan District Health Department's website at www.mmdhd.org.

Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.
###