



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Aging and Long-Term Support Administration
PO Box 45600, Olympia, Washington 98504-5600

February 11, 2020

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PREVENTING TRANSMISSION OF HEPATITIS A VIRUS (HAV)

Dear Provider/Administrator/Superintendent:

Washington State Department of Health (DOH) declared a statewide Hepatitis A (HAV) outbreak in July 2019. Between April 1, 2019 and January 30, 2020, there have been 211 cases (56% requiring hospitalization) and 4 deaths.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is monitoring HAV cases nationally. Over 25 states are currently experiencing an outbreak.

Though many people think about contaminated food and water as the source of HAV, the virus spreads most commonly from person to person. This outbreak is concentrated in persons experiencing homelessness or using illicit drugs. Those with these risks should be offered vaccine at any healthcare encounter.

DOH recently received three reports of acute HAV likely contracted in healthcare settings. Settings included a hospital and a nursing home. The investigation is ongoing to determine what may have contributed to transmission.

Each facility/home is responsible to evaluate their capacity to safely care for residents/clients with acute HAV infection. Follow healthcare provider recommendations for resident/client living arrangements, including whether a private room and/or a dedicated bathroom is required.

DOH Recommendations:

- Ensure proper infection prevention measures during care of residents/clients with acute HAV infection.
 - Place residents/clients with HAV on standard precautions (see Resources for information on infection precautions).
 - Use contact plus standard precautions for residents/clients with HAV who are incontinent, use incontinent care products, or have diarrhea.
 - Monitor staff to ensure they are following infection prevention precautions.
 - Be aware that commonly used healthcare disinfectants are not effective against HAV. Use methods similar to those for norovirus.
 - Perform hand hygiene using soap and water after caring for a resident/client with HAV infection. Alcohol based hand sanitizer is not effective against HAV.
- Consider cohorting residents/clients with acute HAV infection, if feasible.
- Consider post exposure prophylaxis for susceptible residents/clients who share a room or bathroom with a person with acute HAV infection.
- Consider post exposure prophylaxis for susceptible healthcare personnel providing care to HAV residents/clients with diarrhea or who need assistance with toileting.

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- Review HAV sanitation and hand hygiene recommendations (see Resources).
- Report suspected HAV cases to the local health jurisdiction (see Resources) and to the Residential Care Services incident reporting hotline at 800-562-6078 or online: [Online Incident Reporting](#).

Resources:

- Healthcare facilities with case reports or questions about HAV should [contact the local health jurisdiction](#).
- [DOH Hepatitis A outbreak site](#) includes FAQs, and sanitation and hand hygiene guidance.
- [DOH Health Alert for Hospital Emergency Departments, Infection Preventionists, and Administrators](#) (August 2019)
- [Disinfection poster](#) to prevent hepatitis A spread
- [CDC guidelines for infection precautions](#), including definitions for standard and contact precautions
- [CDC information on HAV and HAV outbreaks](#)

Thank you for your continued commitment to resident/client health and safety. If you have any questions about HAV, please contact your local health jurisdiction (see Resources).

Sincerely,



Candace Goehring, Director
Residential Care Services

DSHS: "Transforming Lives"