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NEWS

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Hepatitis A confirmed in Meridian food service employee; Additional potential exposure dates and timeframes added in recent case

Ada County — A case of hepatitis A has been confirmed in a food service employee who worked while contagious at the Frontier Club, located at 116 E. Broadway Ave. in Meridian.

The employee worked the following days and shifts while contagious:

- Friday, August 2 from 9 pm to close (approx. 2 am)
- Saturday, August 3 from 9 pm to close (approx. 2 am)

UPDATED: Dates/timeframes added from case involving ill food service worker employed at Red Robin (211 W. Parkcenter Blvd., Boise location only)

** indicates updated date/timeframe*

- July 18* – before 5 pm
- July 19* – after 4 pm
- July 20* – before 3 pm
- July 21* – after 5 pm
- July 22* – after 4 pm
- July 24 – before 3 pm
- July 27* – before 4 pm
- July 28* – anytime
- July 31 – anytime
- August 1, 2, 3 – after 5 pm
- August 4 – after 4 pm
- August 5 – before 4 pm
- August 7 – anytime

Because the investigation is ongoing, it is possible that dates could change. Any updates to this list will be posted at www.cdhd.idaho.gov/dac-hepA.

Next Steps

People who were patrons of these establishments on the days and timeframes listed are encouraged to check their vaccine records to determine if they have received the hepatitis A vaccine. **Those who are unvaccinated and were potentially exposed can receive protection from hepatitis A if they get immunized within two weeks of the date they were exposed.**

If it has been longer than two weeks since the potential exposure date, you are outside the window for protection from this exposure. Though the risk of becoming infected with hepatitis A through an infected food service worker is low, you are encouraged to watch for symptoms, which usually start within 28 days of exposure, but can occur anywhere from 15 to 50 days of exposure.

Symptoms may include abdominal pain, dark urine, fatigue, fever, jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes), light-colored stools, loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting. If symptoms occur, seek medical attention. Not everyone infected with hepatitis A will experience all of the symptoms and some will not have any symptoms.

Vaccine at Central District Health / More Information

Central District Health is offering hepatitis A vaccine to patrons who may have been exposed at these establishments on the dates and timeframes identified. Where applicable, insurance will be billed, but there will be no out-of-pocket cost to the public.

Vaccine status can often be determined by your health care provider. Impacted patrons and employees can call CDH to look up their vaccine status, make a vaccine appointment or ask questions related to hepatitis A and potential exposure by calling 208-321-2222 between 8 am and 5 pm, Monday through Friday. Messages left after hours will be returned the following business day.

About Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is a virus that affects the liver and easily spreads by entering the mouth after someone touches an object, food or drink contaminated with the virus. If an infected person does not wash their hands well, especially after using the bathroom, small amounts of virus can spread from the hands of the infected person to other objects, surfaces, and food. The virus can make people sick for a number of weeks.

Some people are at a higher risk for getting hepatitis A, including:

- People who are living with or caring for a person who already has hepatitis A
- People living homeless, especially those living unsheltered without good access to sanitation, hygiene and handwashing facilities
- People who have sex with someone who has hepatitis A
- Men who have sex with men
- Illicit drug users (does not have to be injection drugs)
- People with clotting disorders like hemophilia
- International travelers

- People with chronic liver disease, including hepatitis B and hepatitis C are at increased risk for severe infections.

Preventing Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A vaccination is the best way to prevent hepatitis A. The shot is safe and effective; anyone who wants to reduce their risk of hepatitis A should get vaccinated. Anyone who is in the higher risk group should receive the hepatitis A vaccine to protect themselves. Since 1999, children in Idaho routinely receive Hepatitis A vaccine on the recommended vaccine schedule. Central District Health is offering free vaccine to qualifying individuals. Visit cdhd.idaho.gov/dac-hepA to learn more.

Idaho's Hepatitis A Investigation

CDH, along with state public health, has been investigating a hepatitis A outbreak that began emerging in early 2019. To date, 26 cases of hepatitis A have been confirmed in Ada and Elmore counties, which are served by CDH. Neighboring counties including Canyon, Blaine and Twin Falls have also seen a recent increase in hepatitis A cases, bringing the state count to 44 since Jan. 1, 2019. In 2018, only eight cases of hepatitis A were reported in Idaho; one (1) of those cases was in Ada County.

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