

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



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Governor

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Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

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Health Care Provider Alert

Proactive Vaccination Recommended After Substantial Increase in Locally Acquired Hepatitis A Infections in the Tampa Bay Area

Since September 2017, an increase in cases of hepatitis A infection have been identified in the Tampa Bay area. From 2014-2017, the affected counties averaged 15 cases each year. To date in 2018, 43 cases have been reported in the region. Most of these cases do not have international travel exposures. Although infections have occurred across all demographic groups, approximately 67% of the recent cases are among males. The median age of cases is 33 years. Fifty-one percent of cases had a history of intravenous drug use (IVDU) and 28 percent had a history of hepatitis B or C infections.

The Florida Department of Health recommends that health care providers offer hepatitis A vaccine to all persons at risk of hepatitis A infection who have not been vaccinated or do not know their vaccination status.

Hepatitis A is transmitted person-to-person through the fecal-oral route or percutaneously, which may include some types of sexual contact, poor hand hygiene after going to the bathroom or changing diapers, or sharing intravenous needles. Hepatitis A can also be spread through food or water contaminated with fecal matter, which most often occurs in countries where hepatitis A is common. While most patients with hepatitis A will fully recover, >90% of recent cases have required hospitalization.

Intravenous drug users are known to be at increased risk of hepatitis A infection. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has recommended that all persons with IVDU risk receive two doses of hepatitis A vaccine; the second dose should be administered 6-12 months after the first dose.

Additional persons at increased risk for hepatitis A infection include:

- Persons traveling to or working in countries that have high or intermediate endemicity of hepatitis A
- Men who have sex with men
- Persons who have chronic liver disease
- Persons who have clotting-factor disorders
- Household members and other close personal contacts of adopted children newly arriving from countries with high or intermediate hepatitis A endemicity
- Persons with direct contact with persons who have hepatitis A

Immediately report all cases of hepatitis A to the Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County at 727-824-6932 to ensure a prompt public health response to prevent disease among close contacts.