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Public Notice Hepatitis A Case, Ocean City New Jersey

Cape May County Health Department in conjunction with the New Jersey Department of Health announced that a single case of hepatitis A in a food worker employed at **Dunkin' Donuts located at 962 West Ave Ocean City**, New Jersey has been confirmed. This individual worked while they were potentially infectious between **Sunday, January 27th and Thursday, January 31st, 2019**. The management of this establishment is cooperating with sanitary procedures and the investigation.

While the risk to people who ate or drank beverages at the Ocean City Dunkin' Donuts between January 27th and January 31st 2019 is low, out of an abundance of caution the Cape May Health Department is recommending that they receive "post-exposure prophylaxis" (PEP). PEP consists of hepatitis A vaccine and/or immune globulin and can further reduce the risk of acquiring hepatitis A. To be effective, **PEP should be received as soon as possible, but no later than February 14, 2019.**

Dunkin' Donuts worked closely with the Cape May County Department of Health staff and all employees affected were identified and are able to return to work after receiving PEP. The restaurant has now been cleared to reopen.

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. Signs and symptoms of hepatitis A can include the following:

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal discomfort
- Dark urine
- Clay-colored bowel movement
- Joint pain
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes)

Signs and symptoms usually appear 2-4 weeks after exposure, although they may occur 2-7 weeks after exposure. Children under 6 years of age with hepatitis A often do not have or show few signs and symptoms.

Questions and Answers

Who is being recommended to receive “post-exposure prophylaxis” (PEP) for hepatitis A?

Everyone who ate and/or received a beverage at the Ocean City Dunkin’ Donuts between January 27th and January 31st, 2019. Those who have already been vaccinated against hepatitis A do not need to receive PEP. All children have been recommended to be vaccinated against hepatitis A since 2006. If you are unsure if you, or your child, has received hepatitis A vaccine, you should contact your health care provider.

What “post-exposure prophylaxis” (PEP) should I receive?

For almost all individuals, hepatitis A vaccine would be given. The only exception would be those under the age of one, or those rare individuals who have a medical reason (e.g., allergy) that would prevent them from receiving the vaccine. Pregnant women can receive the hepatitis A vaccine.

In addition, some individuals might also be given immune globulin (IG). This group would include those over the age of 40, particularly if they had other risk factors. These risk factors would include having eaten regularly at Dunkin’ Donuts during this time period, as well as having any medical condition that could suppress the immune system. IG is also typically used for those under one year of age. If you are unsure of whether you or your child may need IG, you should contact your health care provider.

Where can I get PEP?

Hepatitis A vaccine, the PEP that most people will need, may be obtained at your healthcare provider, or from a pharmacy without a prescription. Individuals should schedule an appointment with your healthcare provider or pharmacy. Should immune globulin be required, you would need to see your health care provider.

Where can I get more information?

Those suspecting that they have symptoms of hepatitis A should contact their healthcare provider. Persons and healthcare providers with questions or needing more information on hepatitis A can contact the Cape May County Health Department at 609 465-1200. For updates visit www.cmchealth.net or follow us on Facebook for updates.