Hepatitis A Outbreak Now Includes Jefferson County

Key Message
The Jefferson County Department of Health (JCDH), along with the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH), are investigating a Hepatitis A outbreak that has now spread to Jefferson County. Healthcare providers are encouraged to vaccinate high-risk persons and report presumptive cases.

Key Facts
- As of August 14, 2019, ADPH has confirmed 3 Hepatitis A cases in Jefferson County.
- Health care workers are not considered high-risk when using appropriate PPE following Standard Precautions.

JCDH encourages all healthcare providers to assess Hepatitis A vaccination status of high-risk persons
- Vaccinating as many people as possible with Hepatitis A vaccine is essential in stopping the spread of this disease, including children. The Vaccines For Children (VFC) Program provides vaccine for eligible children using the ACIP catch-up schedule through 18 years of age.
- JCDH recommends providers vaccinate anyone in the following high-risk groups, even if no known contact to symptomatic people:
  - Persons with direct contact with persons who have hepatitis A;
  - People who use recreational drugs;
  - Men who have sex with men (MSM);
  - Individuals who are experiencing homelessness or in transient living;
  - Recently incarcerated within the last 50 days;
  - Chronic liver disease;
  - Immunocompromised persons.
- Residents of Jefferson County who are not in high-risk groups may want to take Hepatitis A vaccine as a matter of protection. Many insurance plans cover Hepatitis A vaccine at physicians’ offices or pharmacies.

All presumptive diagnoses of Hepatitis A must be reported within 24 hours by physicians, nurses, hospital administrators, infection control practitioners, AND laboratory directors.
- To report complete the Communicable Disease REPORT Card, https://epiweb.adph.state.al.us/redcap/surveys/?s=H37ENP8ADD or contact ADPH at 1-800-469-4599 (24/7/365).
- Symptoms of a presumptive diagnosis may include acute onset of symptoms of jaundice or fever, abdominal pain, headache, vomiting, nausea, malaise, dark urine, and/or anorexia.
- Document if the patient had contact with a person diagnosed with Hepatitis A.
Specimen Collection and Shipping

ADPH would like all (suspected and confirmed) specimens sent to be genetically characterized. Follow instructions below to properly collect and send specimens to the Bureau of Clinical Laboratories (BCL).

- Collect blood sample in tiger/red top tube, centrifuge, extract approximately 2-3 ml serum and place in sterile tube.
- Serum should be kept refrigerated (36-46° F) until ready to ship.
- The specimen should be placed in an insulated container with frozen ice packs for shipping.
- Complete a BCL Requisition Form for each specimen and test ordered, [http://www.adph.org/bcl/assets/BCL_Requisition_Form.pdf](http://www.adph.org/bcl/assets/BCL_Requisition_Form.pdf). Include patient information, specimen collection date, date of symptom onset, as well as dates, locations of recent travel, and relevant vaccine history.
- Specimens may be dropped off at your local county health department to be couriered to the BCL overnight, or can be shipped directly to the BCL at 8140 AUM Drive, Montgomery, AL 36117 (at your expense). Please call prior to dropping off specimens.
- If you have questions about specimen collection and shipping, call the BCL at 334-260-3400 or email clab@adph.state.al.us.

Primary Point of Contact
Wes Willeford, MD
Jefferson County Department of Health
(205) 930-1445

Stephanie Ayers-Millsap, MPH
Jefferson County Department of Health
(205) 930-1440