



CITY OF HOUSTON

Houston Health Department

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Dear Parents and Teachers:

This letter is to inform you and your children that you may have been exposed to an individual with hepatitis A at Stephen F. Austin senior high school between April 20th 2016 and May 11th 2016. We are sending this letter to inform you of this exposure, to provide additional information about hepatitis A and to provide you with contact information in case you have additional questions or concerns.

The Houston Health Department will be at Stephen F. Austin senior high school, located at 1700 Dumble St, Houston, TX 77023, on Tuesday, May 17th, 2016 at 3:30 pm and Wednesday, May 18th @ 9:00 am respectively to provide information and respond to questions for hepatitis A.

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 an infected person. Children and adults who have not had hepatitis A or who have not been fully immunized (received 2 doses of vaccine) are at risk of developing hepatitis A. For the next month it is very important for you to watch for signs and symptoms of hepatitis A that 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 eyes or skin)

Adults are more likely to have symptoms than children. About 7 out of 10 adults have symptoms, while children less than age 6 years usually have no symptoms and do not get sick from the infection, but can spread it to older children and adults.

Adults, including pregnant women, who have not had 2 doses of hepatitis A vaccine and have not had hepatitis A can receive the vaccine. Depending on hepatitis A disease and vaccine history, age, and health conditions, people exposed to hepatitis A should receive either the hepatitis A vaccine or immunoglobulin within 2 weeks of exposure. If you are unsure of your vaccination status or if your child has not received 2 doses of vaccine, consult your healthcare provider.

People infected with the hepatitis A virus are most infectious the 2 weeks prior to symptom onset. People with hepatitis A can still be infectious up to 7 days after the onset of symptoms. Symptoms of hepatitis A usually start 28 days after exposure, although they may occur 15-50 days after exposure.

Exposed individuals should thoroughly wash hands after toileting and prior to food preparation to avoid any potential further spread of disease. Hand washing should include vigorous soaping of the hands. All surfaces should be washed including the back of the hands, wrists, between fingers and under fingernails. Hands should then be thoroughly rinsed with running water. They should not prepare or handle food for anyone outside of their immediate family.

Adults with hepatitis A who work as food-handlers or children who attend childcare or school setting should be kept out of work and/or school for 7 days after the onset of symptoms.

If you experience hepatitis A symptoms, please contact your healthcare provider and inform them of your exposure to a confirmed hepatitis A case. If you or your healthcare provider has any questions, please call Stephen Austin High school Nurse, Alicia Johnson, at 713-924-1600 or Dr. Prathima Nagireddy or Dr. Yufang Zhang of Houston Health Department at 832-393-5080. As the school will be closed after May 26th, if you develop symptoms after that please call Dr. Prathima Nagireddy or Dr. Yufang Zhang at the Houston Health Department at 832-393-5080.

Sincerely,



Kirstin Short, MPH
Bureau Chief, Epidemiology
Office of Surveillance and Public Health Preparedness
Houston Health Department