



Eric J. Holcomb
Governor

Kristina Box, MD, FACOG
State Health Commissioner

March 29, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

You are receiving this letter because you have been identified as an owner or operator of a facility that prepares and provides food to large groups.

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) and several local health departments are investigating increasing hepatitis A activity in southern Indiana counties. Since January 1, 2018, 40 confirmed cases have been identified, compared to an average of 20 cases statewide each year. Many of these cases have reported travel to Louisville or contact with people who recently traveled to Louisville, where an ongoing community outbreak is occurring. Three of these cases prepared or served food while infectious.

Hepatitis A is a viral infection of the liver. Symptoms appear 15-50 days after exposure and may include abdominal pain, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, dark urine, pale (clay-colored) stool, and jaundice (yellowing of skin and eyes). Hepatitis A virus is shed in stool and is spread by contaminated food, beverages, and ice through unwashed hands and person-to-person contact with people who are infected. People who are infected shed the virus for about three weeks before and after symptoms appear.

The Indiana Retail Food Code (410 IAC 7-24) requires food employees and applicants to report a diagnosis of hepatitis A, symptoms of hepatitis A, exposure to hepatitis A, or contact with a household member diagnosed with hepatitis A to the person-in-charge of the food establishment. According to the Indiana Communicable Disease Reporting Rule (410 IAC 1-2.5), food employees must be excluded from any employment involving food handling if the employee has experienced jaundice in the past seven days or is diagnosed with hepatitis A within the past 14 calendar days from the onset of any symptoms (or within the past seven days if jaundice is present). Persons-in-charge are strongly urged to contact their local health department immediately if they suspect that a food employee may have hepatitis A.

Although not required, food employees are encouraged to receive hepatitis A vaccine, which is safe and effective in preventing hepatitis A. The two-dose vaccination series can be obtained through healthcare providers and pharmacies. If a food employee is diagnosed with hepatitis A, public health officials will work with the food establishment to provide vaccine to other food employees. Any food employee who declines vaccination will be restricted from working with exposed food; clean equipment, utensils, and linens; and unwrapped, single-service and single-use articles for 50 days from the date of the last exposure. Appropriate hand washing is also important in preventing hepatitis A.

Please share this information with employees in your establishment. The ISDH appreciates your partnership in preventing hepatitis A infection. For questions, please contact the ISDH Epidemiology Resource Center at (317) 233-7125.

Sincerely,

Nicole Stone, MPH
Foodborne and Waterborne Disease Epidemiologist



2 North Meridian Street • Indianapolis, IN 46204
317.233.1325 tdd 317.233.5577
www.statehealth.in.gov

To promote and provide
essential public health services.

For more information on Hepatitis A or to report individuals with vomiting, diarrhea or fever associated with food consumption, contact: Laurie Kidwell, Food Safety

Email: LKidwell@isdh.in.gov

Phone: (317) 233-3213



HEPATITIS A - DISINFECTION FOR FOOD FACILITIES

Hepatitis A is a liver infection caused by hepatitis A virus. Highly contagious, hepatitis A virus is usually transmitted by the fecal-oral route, either through person-to-person contact or consumption of contaminated food, beverages or ice. Contamination can occur when infected persons do not wash their hands properly after using the restroom and then touch other objects or food items. Surfaces that are frequently touched should be cleaned and sanitized often.

- Toilet Room Surfaces
- Kitchen Surfaces
- Doorknobs
- Recreation Equipment
- Light Switch Plates
- Phones
- Computer Keyboards
- Railings
- High Chairs
- Tables and Chairs
- Remote Controls
- Wheelchairs and Walkers

Effective Disinfectants

Chlorine Bleach: Mix and use the chlorine solution promptly. Allow 1 minute of contact time and then rinse with water.

- **5000 ppm:** 1 and 2/3 cups bleach in 1 gallon water. Use for stainless steel, food/mouth contact items, tile floors, nonporous surfaces, counters, sinks and toilets. Prepare solution daily and date.

Other Disinfectants:

To determine if a product is effective against hepatitis A, review the product label or product specification sheet and ensure it states “**effective against hepatitis A**” or “**effective against Feline Calicivirus.**” You may also search the product name in the Environmental Protection agency’s registered product database at:

<https://iaspub.epa.gov/apex/pesticides/f?p=PPLS:1>

Specific Cleaning Methods

Wear Gloves and Protect Your Clothing

Hard Surfaces

Disinfect surface with bleach, or other approved disinfectant, ensuring the correct contact time is being met. If the surface is in a food preparation area, make sure to rinse with water after using disinfectant. For surfaces that are corroded or damaged by bleach, use another product that is effective against hepatitis A.



Steps to Clean Spills of Vomit or Feces

- Use personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, masks and gowns.
- Block-off area immediately.
- Clean up visible debris using disposable absorbent material (paper towels or other type of disposable cloths) and minimize aerosols.
- Discard soiled items carefully in an impervious plastic bag.
- Thoroughly clean affected area.
- Disinfect area and objects surrounding the contamination with an approximate disinfectant effective against hepatitis A. See box to the left “Effective Disinfectants” for 5000 ppm sanitizing solution.
- Take off gloves, gown and mask, in that order, and discard before exiting contaminated clean-up area.
- Place discarded PPE in an impervious plastic bag.
- Re-glove and transport bag to a secure trash container; do not allow the bag to come into contact with clothing.
- Always wash your hands after handling any contaminated material, trash or waste.

Proper Handling

- Use chemicals in well-ventilated areas.
- Avoid contact between incompatible chemicals.
- Prevent chemical contact with food during cleaning.
- Handle contaminated material as little as possible and with minimal agitation to reduce aerosols.
- Manage waste safely and dispose in a secure trash container.

Preventing the Spread of Illness

- ✓ All food employees must practice diligent handwashing and good personal hygiene (see below for handwashing procedures).
- ✓ Use utensils or gloves to eliminate bare hand contact with ready- to-eat food.
- ✓ Thoroughly and continuously disinfect the facility and food areas using the guidelines at the reverse of this document.

Handwashing

- ✓ Food employees shall thoroughly wash their hands and arms with soap and warm water for at least 10 to 15 seconds; thoroughly rinse with clean running water and properly dry their hands and arms.
- ✓ Ensure handwashing signs are posted in the appropriate locations.

Employees shall wash their hands in all of the following instances:

- Immediately before engaging in food preparations, including working with non-prepackaged food, clean equipment and utensils, and unwrapped single-use food containers and utensils.
- After touching bare human body parts other than clean hands and clean, exposed portions of arms.
- After using the toilet room.
- After caring for, or handling any animal allowed in a food facility.
- After coughing, sneezing, using a handkerchief or disposable tissue, using tobacco, eating or drinking.
- After handling soiled equipment or utensils.
- Before putting on disposable gloves to start working with food.
- During food preparation, as often as necessary to remove dirt and contamination; and when changing tasks to prevent cross-contamination.
- When switching between working with raw food and working with ready-to-eat food.
- Before dispensing or serving food, or handling clean tableware and serving utensils in the food service area.
- After engaging in other activities that contaminate hands.

Employee Health Guidelines

All food employees must be knowledgeable of the relationship between personal health, hygiene and food safety. Information on this topic can be found in the Indiana Retail Food Code 410 IAC 7-24 Sec. 120-127.

The Employees are Responsible for Notifying the Person in Charge

- Notify the Person in Charge if you have been diagnosed with Hepatitis A infection. Be advised that employees are also required to report the following: Salmonella, Shigella, Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli, Norovirus and/or the following acute gastrointestinal symptoms: diarrhea, fever, vomiting, jaundice, or sore throat with fever (410 IAC 7-24 Sec. 120 & 123).
- Remember, you should not work if you are sick with acute gastrointestinal illnesses. **Acute gastrointestinal illness is diarrhea, either alone or with vomiting, fever or abdominal cramps.**

The Person in Charge is Responsible for Meeting the Following Requirements

- **EXCLUDE** a food employee from the food facility if diagnosed with Hepatitis A virus, Salmonella, Shigella, Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli, Norovirus and/or experience the following acute gastrointestinal symptoms: diarrhea, fever, vomiting, jaundice, or sore throat with fever. (410 IAC 7-24 Sec. 121).
- **RESTRICT** a food employee from working with exposed food, clean equipment, clean linens, clean utensils and unwrapped single-service articles if experiencing:
 - positive stool specimen if they do not report acute gastrointestinal symptoms,
 - report suffering from a sore throat with fever,
 - report an open lesion containing pus (410 IAC 7-24 Sec. 121)

Exclusions and restrictions on employees can be removed by the Person in Charge (410 IAC 7-24 Sec. 122). Your local health department can provide guidance on exclusion and restriction requirements and clearing ill employees for work.