

# Hepatitis A Vaccination Guidance for Outbreak Prevention and Response

## APPENDIX A: VACCINATION IN CORRECTIONAL SETTINGS

### Hepatitis A in correctional settings background

In the national hepatitis A outbreaks, correctional settings, such as jails, have been identified as a venue where hepatitis A infection has spread. In Minnesota, we have identified cases who were incarcerated while infectious. Health professionals working in correctional settings are an important partner for vaccinating high-risk individuals and identifying hepatitis A infections.

Hepatitis A infection can be serious, particularly in patients with underlying conditions. Along with the direct medical costs, investigation and response to hepatitis A cases can be resource intensive. Additionally, when an inmate with hepatitis A infection is released, they can spread hepatitis A to others in the community.

Your actions to prevent hepatitis A are critical in preventing potentially serious outcomes from hepatitis A infection and protecting the community from a hepatitis A outbreak.

### Considerations for vaccination in correctional settings

#### Vaccinate all inmates with hepatitis A vaccine

Hepatitis A vaccination is the most effective way to prevent an outbreak in your jail and community.

- We encourage you to offer vaccines on a regular basis. If possible, time the offering of vaccine so that you can reach inmates shortly after they enter the setting.
- Before ordering vaccine, assess the number of doses needed based on factors such as the census of the jail, how quickly inmates enter and leave the setting, and how often other health care services are utilized (e.g., health screenings).
- If vaccine is not routinely stocked and administered in the correctional setting, ensure that the guidelines outlined in the main guide are implemented before you begin vaccinating.
- Implement the vaccination best practices in this document to the fullest extent possible. Examples of best practices that may need to be modified are:
  - It may be difficult to assess vaccine history in the correctional setting. When history of hepatitis A vaccination is unknown, proceed to vaccinate.
  - Modifications regarding how a patient receives the VIS and documentation of their dose of vaccine may be made based on the correctional setting's policies.

## Occupational risk and vaccination of corrections staff

In general, working in the correctional setting does not impose additional risk for hepatitis A. However, many correctional staff are concerned about their risk and pursue vaccine for themselves.

- Correctional staff who wish to be protected from hepatitis A can visit their health care provider to receive the hepatitis A vaccine.
- The jail health provider may vaccinate staff if they are able, but the priority in stopping an outbreak is vaccination of inmates.
- Ensure kitchen staff are healthy and consider vaccination. Food handlers can spread hepatitis A if they work when ill.

## Promote good hygiene and sanitation in your facility

- Continue to provide clean towels and soap to inmates.
- Encourage regular handwashing with soap and warm water before eating. Alcohol-based hand gel does not kill the hepatitis A virus.
- Ensure that cleaning and disinfection occurs regularly. Use disinfectants that are effective at killing hepatitis A virus and train staff to use them appropriately.
- Remind inmates not to share food, drinks, utensils, or personal hygiene items.

## Watch for symptoms of hepatitis A and report cases

- Test individuals with symptoms of hepatitis A using a hepatitis A IgM antibody test.
- The symptoms of hepatitis A include: fever, headache, fatigue, malaise, nausea, anorexia, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, dark urine, light colored stool, and jaundice.
- Report suspect cases to MDH at 651-201-5414. We will provide guidance on post-exposure prophylaxis and infection control.

## Additional guidance

For more information, read the full *Hepatitis A Vaccination Guidance for Outbreak Prevention and Response* on Hepatitis A Outbreak Prevention and Response ([www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/hepatitis/a/response.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/hepatitis/a/response.html)).