

**Communicable Disease Epidemiology
and Immunization Section**

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Health Alert
Hepatitis A in King County - March 6, 2010

Action Requested:

- **Be aware of two confirmed cases of hepatitis A in King County**
- **Be alert for potential cases of hepatitis A among patients who present with compatible symptoms, including:**
 - **Fever**
 - **Fatigue**
 - **Nausea and loss of appetite**
 - **Diarrhea**
 - **Clay-colored stools**
 - **Abdominal pain**
 - **Joint pain**
 - **Jaundice or dark urine**
- **Report cases of hepatitis A to Public Health immediately upon suspicion by calling (206) 296-4774, 24 hours a day 7 days a week.**

Background

Public Health is investigating two confirmed cases of hepatitis A in King County residents with illness onsets after 2/26/10. Neither had international travel during their exposure periods. It is possible they share a common source in the community. Public Health is exploring epidemiologic links between the two.

Hepatitis A is transmitted person-to-person through the fecal-oral route or through contaminated food or water. Most illnesses are self-limited but the spectrum ranges from mild or asymptomatic (particularly in young children) to fulminant liver failure. The average incubation period for hepatitis A is 28 days (range: 15–50 days). The diagnosis is established by a discrete onset of symptoms, jaundice or elevated serum aminotransferase levels, and positive serum hepatitis A IgM. Testing for hepatitis B and C is also recommended in persons with suspected acute infectious hepatitis.

Resources

Public Health – Seattle & King County Hepatitis A Fact Sheet

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/communicable/diseases/HepatitisA.aspx>

CDC Hepatitis A Guidelines and Recommendations

<http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/HAV/GuidelinesA.htm>