



NEWS RELEASE

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Five Cases Of Hepatitis A Recently Diagnosed

IDPH encourages vaccination for people at greatest risk

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has received confirmation of five hepatitis A cases in east-central Illinois during November. On average there are 70 cases of hepatitis A reported in Illinois each year. To date, 69 cases of hepatitis A have been confirmed statewide in 2018.

“These recent cases are a reminder that states across the country, including states bordering Illinois, have been seeing hepatitis A outbreaks,” said IDPH Director Nirav D. Shah, M.D., J.D. “We encourage those at highest risk for infection, including men-who-have-sex with men, homeless individuals, and those who use drugs, to get vaccinated against hepatitis A.”

Hepatitis A is an infection that can damage the liver, and is passed easily from one person to another through food, water, drug use, and sex. Hepatitis A infection is a vaccine-preventable illness. Symptoms include fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, clay-colored bowel movements, joint pain, and jaundice.

In an effort to prevent hepatitis A outbreaks in Illinois, IDPH is working with 37 local health departments around the state covering 40 counties to make hepatitis A vaccine more readily available. IDPH has requested a large number of hepatitis A vaccines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). That vaccine is being delivered to numerous local health departments across Illinois to be available for free or at a reduced cost for people at the greatest risk of becoming infected.

According to the CDC, from January 2017 to April 2018, there have been more than 2,500 reports of hepatitis A infections from multiple states. Of the more than 1,900 reports for which risk factors are known, more than 1,300 (68%) people infected reported drug use (injection and non-injection), homelessness, or both.

Men who have sex with men, people who use drugs, and people who do not have a home should check with their health department about a free or reduced cost hepatitis A vaccine. For more information about [hepatitis A](#), go to the [IDPH website](#) or to <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/HAV/index.htm>.

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