



This is an official **DHEC Health Advisory**

Distributed via Health Alert Network
May 6, 2020 2:30 PM
10460-DAD-05-06-2020-HEPA

Continuing Hepatitis A Vaccination amid COVID-19 Response

Summary

As cases of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) continue to be detected in South Carolina, it's important that surveillance and disease control activities continue for other infectious conditions.

South Carolina began experiencing a statewide outbreak of hepatitis A virus (HAV) in November 2018 and, although cases of HAV have decreased since the peak of this outbreak, HAV cases also continue to be detected. From November 1, 2018 to March 1, 2020, 785 cases of HAV were identified in South Carolina. During this outbreak, persons identified at high risk of developing HAV infection have included injection and non-injection drug users, persons experiencing homelessness, men who have sex with men, and persons who are or recently were incarcerated. Vaccination of high-risk groups has been a cornerstone of the prevention strategy to help decrease HAV transmission around the state. However, social distancing measures implemented as a result of COVID-19 have hampered efforts to continue special outreach clinics for these high-risk groups. Additionally, a recent increase of HAV cases in the Upstate Region has been noted which highlights the importance to remain vigilant in identifying cases and to maintain prevention efforts. For these reasons, DHEC strongly encourages all healthcare providers, emergency departments, and adult immunization providers (including pharmacists and EMS) to screen patients for risk factors of HAV and provide pre-exposure HAV vaccine to individuals in high-risk groups. Efforts to prevent and reduce HAV cases will also help to reduce hospitalizations associated with HAV during a time when hospital capacity may be impacted due to COVID-19.

Recommendations for All Healthcare Providers, Emergency Departments, and Adult Immunization Providers (including pharmacists and EMS)

- Ask patients about risk factors and high risk exposures for HAV.
 - A patient outreach document can be found on the DHEC website at: <http://www.scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/Library/ML-025662.pdf>
- Strongly consider providing pre-exposure HAV vaccine to persons who report high risk exposures.
 - Healthcare providers, hospitals, and other adult immunization providers can purchase HAV vaccine from vaccine manufacturers or distributors.

- Healthcare providers, hospitals, and other adult immunization providers can also work with the DHEC Immunization Division to obtain HAV vaccine. Please email immunize@dhec.sc.gov to get more information.
- Continue to test patients for HAV if they have symptoms consistent with this disease, particularly, if these patients also report high risk exposures for HAV.
- Report cases of HAV to DHEC. Hepatitis A is urgently reportable within 24 hours by phone (see reporting information below).
 - When reporting cases of HAV, providing available contact information for patients diagnosed with HAV is also important so that timely public health follow up can occur.
- For healthcare providers who are coordinating community activities to provide COVID-19 testing (e.g., drive-thru clinics, walk-up clinics), consider offering HAV vaccination and other routinely recommended vaccinations as part of these community outreach efforts.

Resources

For more information, please visit the DHEC website at: <https://www.scdhec.gov/health/infectious-diseases/hepatitis-overview/hepatitis-outbreak>

DHEC contact information for reportable diseases and reporting requirements

Reporting of **hepatitis A virus** is consistent with South Carolina Law requiring the reporting of diseases and conditions to your state or local public health department. (State Law # 44-29-10 and Regulation # 61-20) as per the DHEC 2020 List of Reportable Conditions available at: <https://www.scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/Library/CR-009025.pdf>

Federal HIPAA legislation allows disclosure of protected health information, without consent of the individual, to public health authorities to collect and receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease. (HIPAA 45 CFR §164.512).

Regional Public Health Offices – 2020

Mail or call reports to the Epidemiology Office in each Public Health Region

MAIL TO:

<p style="text-align: center;">Lowcountry</p> <p>4050 Bridge View Drive, Suite 600 N. Charleston, SC 29405 Fax: (843) 953-0051</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Midlands</p> <p>2000 Hampton Street Columbia, SC 29204 Fax: (803) 576-2993</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Pee Dee</p> <p>1931 Industrial Park Road Conway, SC 29526 Fax: (843) 915-6502 Fax2: (843) 915-6506</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Upstate</p> <p>200 University Ridge Greenville, SC 29602 Fax: (864) 282-4373</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

CALL TO:

<p style="text-align: center;">Lowcountry</p> <p>Allendale, Bamberg, Beaufort, Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester, Hampton, Jasper, Orangeburg</p> <p>Office: (843) 441-1091 Nights/Weekends: (843) 441-1091</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Midlands</p> <p>Aiken, Barnwell, Chester, Edgefield, Fairfield, Kershaw, Lancaster, Lexington, Newberry, Richland, Saluda, York</p> <p>Office: (888) 801-1046 Nights/Weekends: (888) 801-1046</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Pee Dee</p> <p>Clarendon, Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Horry, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Sumter, Williamsburg</p> <p>Office: (843) 915-8886 Nights/Weekends: (843) 915-8845</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Upstate</p> <p>Abbeville, Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Oconee, Pickens, Spartanburg, Union</p> <p>Office: (864) 372-3133 Nights/Weekends: (864) 423-6648</p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p style="text-align: center;">For information on reportable conditions, see https://www.scdhec.gov/ReportableConditions</p>	<p><u>DHEC Bureau of Communicable Disease Prevention & Control</u> Division of Acute Disease Epidemiology 2100 Bull St • Columbia, SC 29201 Phone: (803) 898-0861 • Fax: (803) 898-0897 Nights / Weekends: 1-888-847-0902</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert	Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.
Health Advisory	Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
Health Update	Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.
Info Service	Provides general information that is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.