



## News Releases

[DHSS Home](#) » [Information](#) » [Recent News](#) » [2018](#) » hepatitis-a-012518

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### Hepatitis A case identified in Poplar Bluff, MO

JEFFERSON CITY, MO - A case of hepatitis A has been identified in a food handler that worked while potentially contagious at Huddle House in Poplar Bluff, Missouri. The restaurant, in conjunction with the Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services and Butler County Health Department, is investigating and is taking necessary control measures to decrease the spread of the illness.

Members of the public who ate at the Poplar Bluff, Missouri Huddle House between January 3, 2018 and January 17, 2018 should consider speaking with their health care provider about steps to take to prevent illness. Patrons exposed during this time period should seek medical care if they have symptoms of hepatitis A. Symptoms usually develop between two and seven weeks after exposure and can include:

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Dark urine
- Clay-colored stools
- Joint pain
- Jaundice (yellow skin and eyes)

#### Vaccine and Immune Globulin (IG) for those Exposed to Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is a vaccine-preventable disease. If given within two weeks of exposure, according to the specific CDC guidelines for prophylaxis, vaccine or immune globulin (IG) can prevent illness. With concurrent outbreaks occurring across the nation, vaccine and IG are in limited supply. Therefore, use of these prevention strategies must be restricted to those at highest risk for illness or complications. It is important to note that receiving a Hepatitis A vaccine or IG more than two weeks after a known exposure may not prevent illness.

#### Disease Information

Hepatitis A is a virus that infects the liver. Most people who get hepatitis A feel sick for several weeks, but they usually recover completely and do not have lasting liver damage. In rare cases, hepatitis A can cause liver failure and death; this is more common in people older than 50 and in people with other liver diseases.

#### Prevention

Hepatitis A is spread when a person swallows the virus present on objects or in food or drinks contaminated by tiny amounts of stool from an infected person. The best way to keep from getting sick from hepatitis A is to get vaccinated. Hepatitis A vaccine is highly effective when administered properly. However, because vaccines may be limited at this time, good hand washing practices are even more important than usual to prevent hepatitis A from spreading. Washing hands after going to the bathroom and changing diapers and before preparing or eating food help keep the virus from spreading to uninfected people.

For more information about Hepatitis A, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav/afaq.htm>

Members of the public or providers with patients who are concerned about a potential exposure can call Butler County Health Department at 573-785-8478.

**About the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services:** The department seeks to be the leader in promoting, protecting and partnering for health. More information about DHSS can be found at [health.mo.gov](http://health.mo.gov).