



To: CAHAN San Diego Participants
Date: May 31, 2013

Local Cases Identified in Multistate Hepatitis A Outbreak Associated with Frozen Berry Blend

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Food and Drug Administration, California Department of Public Health, and other state and local health departments are investigating an outbreak of acute hepatitis A virus (HAV) infections that appear to be associated with consumption of Townsend Farms Organic Anti-Oxidant Blend frozen berries sold by Costco stores. Costco is notifying customers who purchased this product since late February 2013 and has removed this product from its shelves.

As of May 31, 2013, 30 people with acute hepatitis A have been linked to the outbreak in five states (Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, and New Mexico). Two (2) outbreak-associated cases are San Diego County residents who purchased the implicated product in the county. Local and national numbers of reported cases are expected to increase given the 2 to 6 week incubation period for hepatitis A. Known symptom onset dates among cases range from 4/29/13 – 5/17/13. Nine of 19 (47%) cases with known clinical information have been hospitalized. Cases range in age from 25-71 years; 63% are female.

Case Reporting and Specimen Submission Requested

A confirmed case of hepatitis A must have a positive anti-HAV IgM serology, discrete onset of symptoms, and jaundice or elevated liver function tests. Symptoms among adults often include fatigue, abdominal discomfort, dark urine, light-colored stool, headache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, itching, or jaundice. Children may have mild symptoms or be asymptomatic.

Local healthcare providers should be alert for suspect cases of hepatitis A and promptly report all confirmed and suspect cases to the Epidemiology Program by faxing a Confidential Morbidity Report (CMR) or by calling 619-692-8499 (Monday-Friday 8-5 pm) or 858-565-5255 (after hours).

The Epidemiology Program may request that diagnostic laboratories send available serum or stool from outbreak-associated cases to the San Diego County Public Health Laboratory for genotyping. Confirmed cases who still have the implicated product should be directed not to consume or discard the product, but to store it until further direction is provided by the Epidemiology Program.

Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP)

Patients who are immune to hepatitis A, and who therefore do not require post-exposure prophylaxis, include patients who have received two doses of HAV vaccine; have a history of IgM or total anti-HAV positivity during or up to four months after consistent clinical illness; or are IgG anti-HAV positive. HAV vaccine has been routinely recommended for California children since 1999, and most pre-adolescent children in California are immune to HAV.

Susceptible patients who report consuming Townsend Farms Organic Anti-Oxidant Blend frozen berries from Costco **within the previous 2 weeks** may receive a dose of single-antigen HAV vaccine or immune globulin

(IG) (0.02 mL/kg), or both, as soon as possible. IG is not recommended >2 weeks after exposure, but vaccine may be given at any time to susceptible people to protect against future exposures.

Single antigen HAV vaccine is preferred over IG for PEP in persons 1-40 years of age, but may also be used at older ages and in infants as young as six months of age. Although CDC prefers IG in persons over 40, IG supply may be limited due to this outbreak. CDPH suggests targeting IG primarily to exposed people who are immunocompromised, have chronic liver disease, or are less than six months of age. HAV vaccine should be offered as PEP within two weeks of exposure for all other people who are susceptible to the disease. This confers long-term immunity and there is evidence that vaccine is immunogenic in people <70 years of age. The efficacy of combined HAV/HBV vaccine for PEP has not been evaluated.

More detailed information on PEP may be found here:

http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Documents/CDPH_HAV%20PEP%20Clinical%20Guidance_%20May%202013.pdf

People exposed to HAV should NOT be tested for HAV infection unless they are symptomatic. False positive HAV IgM test results are common when asymptomatic people are tested.

For more information regarding hepatitis A, including vaccination, immune globulin, and post-exposure prophylaxis, please visit the following CDC hepatitis A website for health professionals:

<http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav/havfaq.htm>

Thank you for your continued participation.

CAHAN San Diego

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