



This alert contains information on investigations in progress and/or diagnoses that may not yet be confirmed.

The Physician Alert is intended primarily for the use of local health care providers, should be considered privileged, and should NOT be distributed further.

Update #1 – Hepatitis A Outbreak

BACKGROUND



The Washoe County Health District (WCHD) in collaboration with the Nevada State Health Division, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), are investigating an outbreak of hepatitis A associated with Townsend Farms Organic Antioxidant Blend, a mix of frozen

berries and pomegranate seeds sold at Costco and Harris Teeter. As of June 5, 2013, 61 cases have been identified among 7 western states including Hawaii. The onset of illness for these cases ranges from mid-April 2013 to May 24th 2013. Eleven cases were hospitalized and no deaths have been reported. Two laboratory confirmed cases were reported in Washoe County since May 20, 2013. Both cases were hospitalized. The serotype of the first case in Washoe County was 1B, which was a match to the first two cases reported from the State of New Mexico. Serotype 1B is rare in North America. Laboratory testing for the 2nd case is pending at CDC.

Both cases consumed this product prior to their illness. According to FDA, local Costco stores (Reno, Sparks, and Carson City) sold 1,157 bags of this product between May 4 – May 30, 2013. This implicated product was pulled from the shelf on May 31st and Costco started its “robocalling” since then to notify those clients that have purchased this product.

Washoe County Health District (WCHD) released its first press release on Friday, May 31st. Since last weekend, WCHD staff has received hundreds of phone calls from the public who reported consuming this product during the past two weeks. WCHD has been evaluating these concerned callers to see whether vaccination or other prophylaxis is indicated. If indicated, we either recommended them to call their healthcare providers (HCP) or if they do not have a HCP or insurance we recommended they come to WCHD clinic to get a vaccination against hepatitis A ..

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

- ◆ If you are seeing patients of any age for an illness compatible with acute hepatitis A (discrete onset of signs and symptoms, including nausea, vomiting, anorexia, fever, fatigue, malaise, abdominal pain, jaundice, dark urine, clay-colored stool, joint pain), obtain a history for traditional risk factors as well as potential exposure to the product mentioned above.
- ◆ The diagnosis of acute hepatitis A virus (HAV) infection is based on serologic testing for immunoglobulin M (IgM) antibody to HAV. Test results for anti-HAV IgM are positive at the time of onset of symptoms and usually accompany the first rise in the alanine aminotransferase (ALT) level. This test is sensitive and specific, and the results remain positive for 3-6 months after the primary infection and for as long as 12 months in 25% of patients.
- ◆ Anti-HAV immunoglobulin G (IgG) appears soon after IgM and generally persists for many years. The presence of anti-HAV IgG in the absence of IgM indicates past infection or vaccination rather than acute infection. The presence of IgG confirms protective immunity.
- ◆ If you are seeing a patient with this product exposure history within the past 14 days who is severely immunocompromised and/or who has chronic or severe liver disease, IG should be given to this person rather than vaccination against hepatitis A. Please call 775-328-2447 and consult with WCHD staff members should you have a problem with IG shortage.
- ◆ Clinicians at Emergency Rooms, Urgent Cares and pharmacies with walk-in vaccination clinics, and/or local travel clinics may have seen increased visits of clients who demanded vaccination against hepatitis A virus since May 31, 2013. From the hundreds of phone calls we have been receiving so far, we know some people have received or are going to receive a vaccination at different clinics or Urgent Cares or Emergency Rooms.

To have a comprehensive assessment on hepatitis A prophylaxis resulting from this outbreak, we would like your assistance. For those clinics or facilities that have administered hepatitis A vaccination to your patients who consumed this product, we are asking that you fill out a short online survey at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/HepAWashoe> as soon as you can, but no later than June 9, 2013.