

What You Need to Know about the hepatitis A case identified in Oxford County.

What is hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus. Hepatitis A is most commonly spread when someone eats food or drinks water that contains the hepatitis A virus. Exposure is more likely when travelling outside Canada in areas of the world where hepatitis A is more common. Contaminated sources may include ice, raw or undercooked shellfish, and raw or frozen fruits and vegetables. Hepatitis A also spreads by eating foods prepared by an infected person.

What are the symptoms of hepatitis A?

Not everyone who is infected will have symptoms. Symptoms are more likely to occur in adults than in children. Even if someone doesn't have symptoms, they can still unknowingly infect another person.

Symptoms of hepatitis A include:

- fever
- dark urine
- loss of appetite
- tiredness
- nausea and vomiting
- stomach cramps or abdominal pain
- jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes)

Symptoms of hepatitis A usually appear within 15 to 50 days after exposure to the virus, with an average of 28 - 30 days. They can be mild and only last one to two weeks or may be more severe and last up to 9 months. Death from hepatitis A is very rare. If you experience any of these symptoms, please contact your health care provider.

I recently ate at the TA Travel Centre in Woodstock. Should I be concerned?

Patrons who ate at the TA Travel Centre in Woodstock, Ontario between **August 6 and August 22, 2019** may be at a risk of getting hepatitis A. An employee of the restaurant who unknowingly had hepatitis A handled food between those dates. The risk of exposure extends to people who ordered off the menu (in restaurant or take out), NOT those who ate at the buffet or bought prepared foods from the convenience store.

What if I ate at the restaurant before August 6 or after August 22?

Patrons who dined at the restaurant before August 6 and/or after August 22 are not at risk as this time frame is outside the communicable (contagious) period for hepatitis A from this worker.

Is it okay to eat at the restaurant now?

Currently, there is no known risk of hepatitis A infection at this restaurant.

What if a friend or family member of mine ate at the restaurant and I've since had contact with them?

At this time, we are only concerned with the individuals who ate at the restaurant themselves as these are the people who had exposure during the communicable period.

What should I do if I ate at TA Travel Centre between August 6 and 22?

Southwestern Public Health will vaccinate eligible persons who live in the Oxford County, St. Thomas and Elgin County during regular business hours by appointment. Eligible persons can also receive this vaccine with their regular health care provider.

You should get vaccinated within 14 days of exposure to the virus. Hepatitis A specific immunization clinics will be held at Southwestern Public Health, 410 Buller Street, Woodstock on:

- **Wednesday, August 28 from 1 pm to 7 pm**
- **Thursday, August 29 from 1 pm to 7 pm**
- **Friday August 30 from 9 am to noon**

If you live outside of the region served by Southwestern Public Health (Oxford County and Elgin County) please contact your regular health care provider or your local public health unit.

Is the vaccine for everyone?

Infants less than six months of age cannot receive the vaccine. If you have an infant under six months who ingested food at the restaurant, you should discuss with your health care practitioner or call public health at the number below. Adults who are immunocompromised or

who have liver disease should also discuss their situation with a health care practitioner or public health. A different vaccination product called immune globulin may be considered in these cases. Note that immune globulin is only available at the hospital emergency department and will not be available at the public health clinics.

People who have been previously fully immunized for hepatitis A are protected against this virus and do not need additional vaccination. To be fully immunized a person would have had one dose of hepatitis A vaccine followed by a second dose 6-12 months apart. This vaccination is often undertaken by people who travel to other countries (TWINRIX®, TWINRIX® Junior, HAVRIX® 1440, HAVRIX® 720 Junior, AVAXIM®, AVAXIM®-Pediatric are examples).

I ate at the restaurant and I think I have symptoms of hepatitis A. What should I do?

If you have symptoms of hepatitis A, please contact your health care provider. Do not come to the public health unit clinic. Vaccination will not be helpful if you have become ill with hepatitis A.

I have more questions. Who should I call?

Southwestern Public Health has set up a dedicated phone line for questions about your potential exposure to hepatitis A at the TA Travel Centre between August 6 and August 22, 2019. Please call 1-800-922-0096 x 5.

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