



Public Health  
Division

# County of Santa Cruz

## HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

POST OFFICE BOX 962, 1080 Emeline Ave., SANTA CRUZ, CA 95061-0962  
TELEPHONE: (831) 454-4000 FAX: (831) 454-4488 TDD: Call 711

### Press Release

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**Contact: Jessica Randolph, PIO**  
**Phone: (831) 454-4472**

## Above Average Incidence of Acute Hepatitis A Virus Infection

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, CA.** Santa Cruz County is experiencing an increase in new cases of Hepatitis A infection. Of concern is the fact that there have been recent, serious and widespread outbreaks of Hepatitis A in other counties.

To address this concern the County has been conducting vaccination clinics in the community and working with partners in an effort to reach those most at risk. "We are partnering with the community to ensure the people most at risk, particularly the homeless, have access to the hepatitis A vaccine," said Arnold S. Leff, MD, County Public Health Officer. "We've increased our outreach to vulnerable populations and have worked to make information available. We are strongly encouraging people who are at risk to check with their health care providers and get vaccinated for hepatitis A."

Hepatitis A can be spread through contaminated food or water. Hepatitis A can also be spread by having sexual contact or sharing drugs with someone who is infected. Those most at risk include: travelers to areas with high or intermediate rates of endemic Hepatitis A; men who have sex with men; users of injection and non-injection illegal drugs; persons with clotting factor disorders; and household members or caregivers of persons infected with Hepatitis A.

Symptoms of hepatitis A include jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes), fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, and light-colored stools. Symptoms usually appear over a number of days and last less than two months. However, some people can be ill for as long as six months. Hepatitis A can sometimes cause liver failure and even death.

To prevent the spread of hepatitis A infection: get the hepatitis A vaccination; wash your hands frequently, especially after using the bathroom or changing diapers, and before handling food; do not have sex with someone who has a Hepatitis A infection; use your own towels, toothbrushes and eating utensils; and don't share food, drinks or smokes with other people.

Individuals are recommended to check their hepatitis A vaccination status and talk to their health care providers about the risks for hepatitis A. Persons planning an international trip should check the CDC Travelers' Health website (<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>) to see if hepatitis A vaccination is recommended for the intended destinations.

Hepatitis A vaccine is available at many doctors' offices and clinics and at some retail pharmacies. For persons without health insurance, vaccine is available at County Clinics. For a list of locations, visit <http://www.santacruzhealth.org/HSAHome/HSADivisions/ClinicServices.aspx>.

For additional information, please visit [www.SantaCruzHealth.org/HepA](http://www.SantaCruzHealth.org/HepA).