



Summit County Public Health

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hepatitis A Outbreak Update

SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO- Summit County Public Health would like to remind Summit County residents to get your hepatitis A vaccination. Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent hepatitis A infection.

Since 2016, viral hepatitis A community outbreaks have been reported in 18 states nationwide. As of March 29, 2019, these multiple outbreaks have resulted in 15,000 reported cases, 8,500 hospitalizations, and 140 deaths. The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) declared a statewide outbreak in early 2018, and so far there have been 2044 cases, 1259 hospitalizations, and 7 deaths. ***Since the beginning of 2019, Summit County has experienced an alarming increase in the number of reported hepatitis A cases.*** There have been additional 32 cases reported in 2019, of which 19 have been linked to the nationwide outbreak. Drug misuse, especially drugs that are injected, have been reported at higher rates in 2019 hepatitis A cases, suggesting that hepatitis A is circulating among this population in Summit County.

Statewide, hepatitis A has been transmitted via contact with objects, food or drink contaminated with fecal matter from an infected person, or by close person to person contact. People in the following groups have been identified as being at higher risk for becoming infected with hepatitis A, and for having greater complications from the disease:

- People with direct contact with individuals infected with the virus
- Men who have sex with men
- People who use street drugs whether they are injected or not
- People who are incarcerated
- People experiencing homelessness
- People who have traveled to other areas of the U.S. currently experiencing outbreaks

Symptoms of hepatitis A include:

- Yellow skin or eyes
- Fatigue

- Loss of appetite
- Abdominal pain
- Dark urine and/or gray-colored stools
- Joint pain
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Fever

Infected individuals can be sick from a few weeks to several months. Individuals experiencing these symptoms should seek medical advice immediately.

For more information on hepatitis A visit:

Summit County Public Health: <https://www.scph.org/news/hepatitis-outbreak>

Ohio Department of Health Hepatitis A Outbreak Website:

<https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/outbreak-response-bioterrorism-investigation-team/news/newsevent1>

CDC Hepatitis A outbreak information: <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/outbreaks/2017March-HepatitisA.htm>

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