Maine CDC Health Update

Hepatitis A in Maine

*June 28, 2019*

Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) is providing this update on hepatitis A cases in the state in 2019.

Providers or labs reported 24 cases of acute hepatitis A to date this year in Maine. Of these cases, six occurred last week and one case is currently under investigation in an out-of-state resident tested in Maine. Nine cases are linked to exposures at a restaurant in Caribou, and five cases are linked to an ongoing outbreak in New Hampshire. The remaining cases are sporadic.

**Acute hepatitis A cases by county, Maine 2019**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| County | Number of cases | New cases since last update |
| Androscoggin | 1 | 0 |
| Aroostook | 9 | 0 |
| Cumberland | 1 | 1 |
| Hancock | 0 | 0 |
| Franklin | 1 | 0 |
| Kennebec | 3 | 0 |
| Knox | 1 | 1 |
| Lincoln | 0 | 0 |
| Oxford | 0 | 0 |
| Penobscot | 1 | 0 |
| Piscataquis | 0 | 0 |
| Sagadahoc | 0 | 0 |
| Somerset | 0 | 0 |
| Waldo | 0 | 0 |
| Washington | 1 | 0 |
| York | 5 | 0 |
| Total Cases | **23\*** | **2** |

*\*cases listed in this table only include Maine residents, total cases reported in Maine may be higher due to out-of-state persons getting tested in Maine*

The United States overall is seeing an increase of hepatitis A with over 7,800 cases reported to date in 2019 compared to 2,580 reported by this time in 2018 (data current through June 15, 2019).

Maine CDC will continue to post periodic updates on this situation.

Hepatitis A is a vaccine-preventable, contagious liver disease caused by a virus. Symptoms range from mild illness to a severe sickness that requires hospitalization and can last several months. Most adults with hepatitis A have a sudden onset of symptoms such as tiredness, low appetite, stomach pain, nausea, dark urine, and jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes). Most children younger than six years of age do not have symptoms or have an unrecognized infection. If you develop symptoms of hepatitis A, please contact your health care provider.
This disease usually spreads when a person ingests the virus from contaminated objects, food, or drinks. It can also spread from close contact with an infected person such as caring for someone who is ill.

Outside of these circumstances, the risk of infection is extremely low. Hepatitis A is not spread through casual contact, such as shaking hands or being in the same room as an infected individual.

The best way to prevent hepatitis A infection is to get vaccinated. Other preventive measures include practicing good hand hygiene - thoroughly washing hands after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating food.

For more information on hepatitis A please visit [www.maine.gov/dhhs/hepatitis](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/hepatitis) or <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav/index.htm>