

NEWS

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Christine Myron, Public Information Officer

Office: 208-327-8639 | Cell: 208-871-1712

cmyron@cdh.idaho.gov | cdh.idaho.gov/news

Hepatitis A confirmed in food service employee who worked at a Boise restaurant

Central District Health offering free vaccine to impacted patrons and employees

Ada County — A case of hepatitis A has been confirmed in a food service employee who worked while contagious at the Black Bear Diner, located at 7530 State Street in Boise. The employee worked only at the northwest Boise location, which is under separate ownership from the south Boise location, which shares the same name.

Hepatitis A is a virus that affects the liver and can make people sick for a number of weeks. To-date, the food service worker is the only hepatitis A case in Idaho associated with this restaurant.

The risk of becoming infected with hepatitis A through an infected food service worker is low. However, CDH encourages anyone with incomplete or unknown hepatitis A vaccine status who ate at the Black Bear Diner located off of State Street on a date listed below to consider getting vaccinated.

Dates of Potential Exposure

- January 26*, 30*, 31* (2020)
- February 1*, 2*, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16 (2020)

** As of 2/19/2020, specified dates are outside of the two-week window to receive vaccine to protect from this potential exposure; those previously vaccinated for hepatitis A are considered protected.*

Next Steps

People who ate at this establishment on any of the dates identified are encouraged to check their vaccine records to determine if they have received the hepatitis A vaccine. **Those who are unvaccinated and were potentially exposed can receive protection from hepatitis A if they get immunized within two weeks of the date they were exposed.**

It may be helpful for anyone who may have eaten at this restaurant during this timeframe to reference any receipts or charges to their credit or debit cards for specific dates.

If it has been longer than two weeks since the potential exposure date, you are outside the window for protection from this exposure. Though the risk of becoming infected with hepatitis A through an infected food service worker is low, you are encouraged to watch for symptoms, which usually start within 28 days of exposure, but can occur anywhere from 15 to 50 days of exposure.

Symptoms may include abdominal pain, dark urine, fatigue, fever, jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes), light-colored stools, loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting. If symptoms occur, seek medical attention. Not everyone infected with hepatitis A will experience all of the symptoms and some will not have any symptoms.

Because the investigation is ongoing, it is possible that dates could change. Any updates to this list will be posted at www.cdh.idaho.gov/dac-hepa.

Vaccine at Central District Health / More Information

Central District Health is offering a hepatitis A vaccine to patrons who may have been exposed at this establishment on a date and timeframe identified. Where applicable, insurance will be billed, but there will be no out-of-pocket cost to the public.

Vaccine status can often be determined by your health care provider. Impacted patrons and employees can call CDH to look up their vaccine status, make a vaccine appointment or ask questions related to hepatitis A and potential exposure by calling 208-321-2222 between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday. Messages left after hours will be returned the following business day.

About Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is a virus that affects the liver and easily spreads by entering the mouth after someone touches an object, food or drink contaminated with the virus. If an infected person does not wash their hands well, especially after using the bathroom, small amounts of virus can spread from the hands of the infected person to other objects, surfaces, and food. The virus can make people sick for a number of weeks.

Some people are at a higher risk for getting hepatitis A, including:

- People who are living with or caring for a person who already has hepatitis A
- People living homeless, especially those living unsheltered without good access to sanitation, hygiene and handwashing facilities
- People who have sex with someone who has hepatitis A
- Men who have sex with men
- Illicit drug users (does not have to be injection drugs)
- International travelers

- People with clotting disorders like hemophilia
- People with chronic liver disease, including hepatitis B and hepatitis C are at increased risk for severe infections.

Preventing Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A vaccination is the best way to prevent hepatitis A. The shot is safe and effective; [anyone](#) who wants to reduce their risk of hepatitis A should get vaccinated. Anyone who is in the higher risk group should receive the hepatitis A vaccine to protect themselves. Since 1999, children in Idaho routinely receive hepatitis A vaccine on the recommended vaccine schedule. Central District Health is offering free vaccine to qualifying individuals. Visit cdh.idaho.gov/dac-hepa to learn more.

Idaho's Ongoing Hepatitis A Investigation

CDH, along with state public health, has been investigating a hepatitis A outbreak that began emerging in early 2019. Since January 1, 2019, 67 cases of hepatitis A have been confirmed in Idaho, with cases limited to the state's southern counties. In 2018, only eight cases of hepatitis A were reported in Idaho; one (1) of those cases was in Ada County.

STATEMENT from Black Bear Diner

Today, Black Bear Diner was notified that an employee of its Boise, Idaho diner, located 7530 W. State Street, was diagnosed with hepatitis A.

The diagnosis was immediately reported to Idaho's Central District Health (CDH). The diner was inspected by CDH and declared safe; however, out of an abundance of caution and concern, Black Bear Diner will be immediately vaccinating all local staff for hepatitis A.

Black Bear Diner takes the health and safety of its guests and team members seriously, and maintains stringent procedures to ensure safe, sanitary and well-maintained diners. Black Bear Diner has received no other reports of employee and/or guest illness and the diner remains fully operational.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact Black Bear Diner at 530.782.5846.

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