

Prioritization of Hepatitis A Vaccination for Food Handlers and Healthcare Workers in Response to the Hepatitis A Outbreak in Michigan: Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Are there supply issues with the adult formulation of hepatitis A vaccine?

- A. Adult hepatitis A vaccine is being allocated by the manufacturers to meet the demand, resulting from outbreaks across the country. There are not sufficient supplies to meet the needs of all initiatives.

Q. What is the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) prioritization for vaccinating people against hepatitis A virus?

- A. First priority for the vaccine is for postexposure prophylaxis. The MDHHS will keep a stock of vaccine available for local health departments for this use. Further, MDHHS supports focused efforts to vaccinate high risk individuals in areas of the state with the largest number of cases.

Focused efforts for vaccinating high risk individuals in the outbreak affected areas include:

- Men who have sex with men (MSM)
- Persons with a history of substance abuse
- Persons currently homeless or in transient living
- Correctional facility inmates
- Persons with underlying liver disease

Prioritization for Food Handlers: Notices will be coming out from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) to food handlers in the outbreak area recommending they receive hepatitis A vaccine. It would be preferable for the food handler to obtain the vaccine from their primary care provider or the local health department and bill their insurance if they have coverage. If the food handler does not have insurance coverage or is unable to obtain the vaccine from their primary care provider, state purchased vaccine could be used. At this point in time, MDHHS cannot support routine vaccination of food handlers with state purchased vaccine outside the outbreak areas.

Prioritization for Healthcare Workers: MDHHS always believes it is important to assure healthcare workers are protected from vaccine preventable diseases. MDHHS supports hepatitis A vaccination for healthcare workers who have contact with patients, in areas of the state affected by the outbreak. It is assumed that most healthcare workers have insurance coverage for the vaccine and it should be covered with private purchase vaccines.

Prioritization for People Wishing to be Immunized: MDHHS supports vaccinating anyone who wishes to be protected from hepatitis A, but believe that the use of publicly purchased vaccine should be focused on areas of the state with higher numbers of hepatitis A cases and for postexposure prophylaxis. The recommendation to focus on areas of the state with higher numbers of hepatitis A cases is because of the current vaccine supply constraints. MDHHS encourages those who wish to be immunized to contact their primary care provider or local health department to discuss getting vaccinated against hepatitis A. Adults who are routinely recommended to get vaccinated against hepatitis A include those who are: traveling to countries where hepatitis A is common, MSM, use illegal drugs, have chronic liver disease such as hepatitis B or C, are being treated with clotting-factor concentrates, work with hepatitis A-infected animals or in hepatitis A

research laboratory, expect to have close personal contact with an international adoptee from a country where hepatitis A is common.

Q. Are there supply issues with the pediatric formulation of hepatitis A vaccine?

- A. There are **NO** supply issues with the pediatric formulation of hepatitis A vaccine and everyone should continue to vaccinate according to the ACIP recommended schedule.

Q. How much adult formulation of hepatitis A vaccine does the MDHHS currently have available?

- A. The State of Michigan is in the process of ordering adult hepatitis A vaccine to support local health department vaccination efforts using state funds, but in limited quantities. MDHHS has been allocated 1,450 doses of hepatitis A vaccine per month from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Vaccine purchased by MDHHS is all considered publically purchased vaccine.

Q. What vaccine is available for hepatitis A?

- A. There are two manufacturers of adult hepatitis A vaccine in the United States. Merck adult hepatitis A vaccine (VAQTA) is currently not available and will most likely not be available until sometime in the first quarter of 2018. Glaxo Smith Kline (GSK) produces the other adult hepatitis A vaccine (Havrix) and is available for ordering. Orders have been limited because of increased demand and limited supplies.

Q. What is the difference between publicly and privately purchased vaccines?

- A. Section 317 of the Public Health Service Act authorizes the federal purchase of vaccines to vaccinate children, adolescents, and adults. This is considered publicly purchased vaccine. Section 317 vaccine is a national resource that will continue to be used to fill critical public health needs, such as providing routine vaccination for those with no insurance and responding to outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases. Vaccine purchased using state dollars is also considered public vaccine.

Private vaccine is purchased directly by providers to vaccinate their patients who have health insurance. They work directly with vaccine manufacturers to purchase vaccine.

[Questions Answered on Vaccines Purchased with 317 Funds](#)

Q. Can Twinrix be used to vaccinate individuals? Can Twinrix be used as postexposure prophylaxis?

- A. Twinrix, which is manufactured by GSK, is not in short supply and could be a routine option for vaccinating individuals who would like to be protected from hepatitis A. Twinrix is a hepatitis A and hepatitis B combination vaccine administered in a three dose series. This could be a good vaccination option for food handlers. Twinrix is **not** recommended for postexposure prophylaxis.

For more information about the hepatitis A outbreak, please go to www.michigan.gov/hepatitisaoutbreak