



State of California—Health and Human Services Agency  
California Department of Public Health



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**October 19, 2017 - Updated Clinical Advisory**  
*(supercedes July 13, 2017 Clinical Advisory)*

**Hepatitis A Outbreak in California - Limited Adult Vaccine Supply Forecast for Fall, 2017**

An outbreak of hepatitis A virus (HAV) disease is ongoing in California among persons experiencing homelessness or using illicit drugs in settings of limited sanitation. [In San Diego County](#), at least 507 HAV cases and 19 deaths have been reported since November 2016. [In Santa Cruz County](#), at least 73 cases have been reported since April 2017. Cases due to the same strain of HAV have been identified in these and other counties as well as in several other states.

HAV is being spread person-to-person in this outbreak. As the use of adult hepatitis A vaccine has increased to help control this outbreak and outbreaks in other states, the supplies for adult immunization for the last quarter of 2017 have become constrained.

In California, hepatitis A transmission and risk vary by county and can vary within counties. CDPH therefore recommends the following:

- 1) Vaccines should be prioritized for areas with ongoing transmission of hepatitis A and for groups at increased risk of infection in those areas. Please contact [your local health department](#) regarding local immunization recommendations, including recommendations regarding occupational groups.
- 2) Depending on vaccine availability, clinicians seeing patients in primary care settings should consider vaccination of persons routinely recommended to receive hepatitis A vaccine. Based on [your local health department](#) recommendations, priority should be given to those the individual patients who have the highest immediate risk of acquiring hepatitis A infection or becoming severely ill if infected. Groups that are routinely recommended to receive hepatitis A vaccine include:
  - a. Persons exposed to a case of hepatitis A
  - b. Persons with chronic liver disease
  - c. Men who have sex with men
  - d. Persons using illicit drugs, other than marijuana
  - e. Persons experiencing homelessness
  - f. Travelers to countries where hepatitis A is common

- 3) If adult single antigen hepatitis A vaccine is not available, providers could consider using the combined hepatitis A and hepatitis B vaccine (Twinrix®) for pre-exposure prophylaxis (Twinrix® not recommended for post-exposure prophylaxis) or deferring immunization until additional vaccine becomes available. Vaccine may also be available in [pharmacies](#), and is covered as a pharmacy benefit for several insurance sources, including Medi-Cal fee for service and managed care, as well as several qualified health plans through Covered California.
- 4) All children in the United States are recommended to receive hepatitis A vaccine. At this time pediatric vaccine supplies are not constrained, and recommendations for routine childhood immunization are unchanged.
- 5) To assist with outbreak control, CDPH requests that health care providers contact the local health department immediately during business hours (or 24/7 in San Diego) to report a suspected hepatitis A infection in patients experiencing homelessness and/or using injection or non-injection illicit drugs. Please notify the local health department while the patient is still in the facility, as this may be the only opportunity for public health officials to interview the patient.
- 6) To date, there is no increased risk of hepatitis A infection for the general population.

For more information, go to [the CDPH hepatitis A website](#):

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/Hepatitis-A.aspx>