



Frozen Strawberries Linked to Hepatitis A Outbreak

Five people have contracted hepatitis A, and two of those have been hospitalized.

March 27, 2023 By Laura Schmidt

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are investigating [five outbreak-associated](#) cases of [hepatitis A](#) virus (HAV) in Washington state linked to frozen organic strawberries that are now [being recalled](#).

As of March 13, 2023, five people, ranging in age from 38 to 61 years old, have contracted HAV. Two of these individuals were hospitalized; no deaths have been reported.

As a result of the outbreak, Scenic Fruit Company of Gresham, Oregon, is recalling frozen organic strawberries sold to Costco, Aldi, PCC Community Markets and to food distributors Vital Choice Seafood and KeHE as well as a frozen organic tropical blend of berries sold to Trader Joe's.

The CDC has determined that this outbreak likely stems from frozen organic [strawberries](#) imported in 2022 from certain farms in Baja California, Mexico.

This is not the first time produce from farms in Baja California have been linked to hepatitis A. In fact, the HAV strain that caused these recent illnesses was found to be [genetically identical](#) to the strain that caused a [foodborne](#) hepatitis A [outbreak in 2022](#) that was linked to fresh organic strawberries.

Hepatitis A is an acute form of hepatitis, meaning that it does not cause long-term, or chronic, infection. HAV is spread from one person to another when the fecal matter of someone with HAV gets into another person's mouth, which can happen in a number of ways, including eating food handled or prepared by someone with hepatitis A. If you have had hepatitis A once, you cannot be infected with the virus again. However, you can still be infected with other hepatitis viruses, such as hepatitis B virus and hepatitis C virus.

Out of an abundance of caution, the CDC recommends consumers throw away any frozen organic strawberries purchased from Scenic Fruit Company. Click [here](#) to view the lots subject to this recall.

To learn more, click [#Hepatitis A](#) or [Health Basics on Hepatitis A](#). It reads in part:

Not everyone who contracts hepatitis A virus (HAV) will experience noticeable symptoms. For example, many babies and young children with HAV do not experience any symptoms of infection. Symptoms are much more likely to occur in older children, adolescents and adults.

Symptoms of hepatitis A (and acute hepatitis in general) can include:

- Yellowing of the skin, whites of the eyes and under the fingernails (jaundice)
- Feeling tired and rundown (fatigue)
- Pain in the upper-right abdomen
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Fever
- Nausea
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Dark urine and/or pale stool
- Joint pain.

It can take the immune system up to eight weeks to clear HAV from the body. If symptoms occur, they usually do so within two to four weeks after infection. The symptoms of hepatitis A can last anywhere from a week to more than a month. About 15% of people with hepatitis A experience symptoms that last between six to nine months.

The usual treatment for hepatitis A is bed rest. It is also important to drink plenty of fluids, particularly if you are experiencing diarrhea or vomiting. Over-the-counter pain relievers, such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, etc.), can help manage some of the symptoms of hepatitis A, although it's best to consult with your health care provider before using any medications.