Whole Foods Probed Amid Potential Hepatitis A Link

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Health officials in Detroit have launched an investigation into a local Whole Foods Market over fears that two recently diagnosed cases of hepatitis A virus (HAV) in the city may be linked to the store's prepared foods section, The Wall Street Journal reports.

According to a statement from Whole Foods, an employee working in the store's prepared foods section was recently diagnosed with the liver virus, prompting the store to contact local health officials. Shortly thereafter, the grocer was informed by the Detroit Health Department that a second person—who reported shopping in the store—had also been diagnosed with hepatitis A.

Whole Foods Market, well known for its extensive array of fresh-cooked foods, has increasingly come under health safety concerns in the prepared foods section of its stores. Earlier this year, the grocery conglomerate was forced to close a commercial kitchen in Boston after the FDA filed several food safety warnings against the location. Last year, Whole Foods had to recall several items from prepared foods sections after the products tested positive for listeria.

Detroit health officials say that at this point, it is very unlikely that hepatitis A will spread beyond the store. According to Whole Foods, the infected employee voluntarily notified the store of his infection soon after diagnosis, allowing for a quick reaction. The Detroit Department of Health also recently visited the location to test and vaccinate other food handlers against the illness.

Both Whole Foods and local health officials have assured people in Detroit that they should "feel comfortable" buying the market's wares moving forward.

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