Recent Hepatitis A Outbreaks Occurring in Gay and Bisexual Men

June 28, 2019 By HHS Viral Hepatitis Blog

Cross-posted from the HHS.gov Hepatitis blog

As we wrap up Pride Month, I'd like to take a moment to encourage gay and bisexual men to get vaccinated for hepatitis A. Widespread outbreaks of hepatitis A have recently been occurring across the country and many have affected gay and bisexual men. But hepatitis A can be easily prevented with a safe and effective vaccine. One dose of the hepatitis A vaccine has been shown to control outbreaks and provides up to 95% protection in healthy adults.

Hepatitis A is a very contagious liver infection that is caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV). HAV is found in the stool of people who are infected and it can survive on surfaces for several months and still cause illness. Hepatitis A is most commonly spread from person to person, which is how people are getting infected in the current outbreaks. This is happening through close personal contact and sex with an infected person. People who get HAV can feel sick for a few weeks to several months. While most people recover and do not have lasting liver damage, some people become very sick and need to be hospitalized. In some cases HAV can cause death, especially for people who are older or have other health problems.

Despite having a safe and effective HAV vaccine, not enough people get vaccinated. This is why there are large outbreaks now occurring in more than 20 states. In 2016, under 10% of adults 19 years old and older had been vaccinated for HAV.

The hepatitis A vaccine is recommended for adults at risk, including gay and bisexual men. People who are at risk for should get vaccinated as soon as possible. To learn more about hepatitis A, click here.

You can also use Vaccine Finder to locate hepatitis A vaccine services near you.

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