



**PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE**

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# NEWS

April 19, 2019

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## **Possible Hepatitis A Exposure on Commercial Bus Route Between Salt Lake City and Boise**

**Ada County** — Central District Health Department (CDHD) is asking anyone who rode a Greyhound bus from Salt Lake City to Boise on Wednesday, April 10 and used the on-board restroom to contact the health department for information about a potential exposure to hepatitis A, a highly contagious virus that affects the liver. Riders who did not use the on-board restroom do not need to contact the health department.

**Bus riders who were on this route should call 208-327-8625 as soon as possible** to talk to health department staff who will assess exposure risk. Those who were exposed could get protection from the virus if they receive the hepatitis A vaccine by or on Tuesday, April 23. Calls received outside of regular business hours (8 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday) will be checked daily and messages returned.

### **About Hepatitis A**

Hepatitis A easily spreads by entering the mouth after someone touches an object, food or drink contaminated with the virus. If an infected person does not wash their hands well, especially after using the bathroom, small amounts of virus can spread from the hands of the infected person to other objects, surfaces, and food.

Hepatitis A can cause symptoms that range from mild to severe, lasting several months. Common symptoms include tiredness, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, loss of appetite, low-grade fever, pale-colored bowel movements and dark urine, joint pain and yellowing of the whites of the eyes and skin (jaundice). Not everyone infected with hepatitis A will experience all of the symptoms and some will not have any symptoms.

### **Those at the highest risk for getting Hepatitis A include:**

- People who are living with or caring for a person who already has hepatitis A
- People living homeless, especially those living unsheltered without good access to sanitation, hygiene and handwashing facilities
- People who have sex with someone who has hepatitis A
- Men who have sex with men
- Illicit drug users (does not have to be injection drugs)
- People with clotting disorders like hemophilia
- International travelers
- People with chronic liver disease, including hepatitis B and hepatitis C are at increased risk for severe infections.

### **Preventing Hepatitis A**

Hepatitis A vaccination is the best way to prevent hepatitis A. The shot is safe and effective; anyone who wants to reduce their risk of hepatitis A should get vaccinated. Anyone who is in the higher risk groups should receive the hepatitis A vaccine to protect themselves.

### **Idaho's Hepatitis A Investigation**

CDHD, along with state public health, has been investigating a hepatitis A outbreak that began emerging in early 2019. To date, eight cases of hepatitis A have been confirmed in Ada and Elmore counties, which are served by CDHD. Neighboring counties including Canyon, Blaine and Twin Falls have also seen a recent increase in hepatitis A cases, bringing the state count to 14 since Jan. 1, 2019. In 2018, only eight cases of hepatitis A were reported in Idaho.

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