

DPHHS HAN ADVISORY

Cover Sheet

DATE: June 3, 2013

SUBJECT: Multistate outbreak of Hepatitis A potentially associated with a frozen berry blend product

INSTRUCTIONS:

DISTRIBUTE to your local HAN contacts. This HAN is intended for general sharing of information. **Remove this cover sheet before redistributing and replace it with your own.**

For LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT reference only

DPHHS Subject Matter Resource for more information regarding this HAN, contact:

**DPHHS CDCP
Epidemiology Section
1-406-444-0273**

**DPHHS Health Alert Hotline:
1-800-701-5769**

**DPHHS HAN Website:
www.han.mt.gov**

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Please ensure that DPHHS is included on your HAN distribution list.

Categories of Health Alert Messages:

Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Information Service: passes along low level priority messages that do not fit other HAN categories and are for informational purposes only.

Please call DPHHS to update contact information at 444-0919

DPHHS policy is to forward all HAN messages from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Information Sheet

Date: June 3, 2013

Subject: Multistate outbreak of Hepatitis A potentially associated with a frozen berry blend product

Background: The FDA, the CDC, and state and local officials are investigating a multi-state outbreak of Hepatitis A illnesses potentially associated with Townsend Farms Organic Anti-Oxidant Blend, a frozen blend containing pomegranate seed mix.

As of May 31, 2013, 30 people infected with Hepatitis A have been reported from 5 states: Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, Arizona, and California. No cases have been identified in Montana; however, product was sold through Costco stores in Montana.

This HAN is to assist with response and to provide initial guidance that may be useful to local providers who might receive calls. DPHHS will provide updates as more information becomes available.

Recommendations for Public Health Agencies:

CDC recommends that consumers do not eat "Townsend Farms Organic Anti-Oxidant Blend" frozen berries, and to discard any remaining product.

Consumers who have already received hepatitis A vaccination in the past are unlikely to become ill with the disease, and are NOT recommended for vaccination. Hepatitis A vaccination can prevent illness if given within two weeks of exposure to the contaminated product. Consumers who have consumed this product in the last two weeks, and have never been vaccinated, should contact their health care provider to find out if they should be vaccinated.

Public Health Departments should assess any suspected or confirmed cases for exposure to this product, and notify the DPHHS epidemiology program.

Recommendations for Health Care Providers:

Costco has sent their customers a letter informing them of the CDC and FDA's recommendations regarding this product. The information given to consumers encouraged them to contact their health care providers for vaccine or clinical illness, and have been informed of the following:

1. Do not eat 'Townsend Farms Organic Anti-Oxidant Blend' and discard any remaining product
2. Hepatitis A vaccination can prevent illness if given within two weeks of exposure to the contaminated product. If you consumed this product in the last two weeks and have never been vaccinated, contact your health care provider to find out if you should be vaccinated
3. If you have already received the hepatitis A vaccination in the past, you are unlikely to become ill with the disease
4. Contact your health care provider right away if you develop any of these symptoms:
 - Yellow eyes or skin
 - Abdominal pain
 - Pale stools
 - Dark urine

Current CDC guidelines for post-exposure protection against Hepatitis A:

Until recently, an injection of immune globulin (IG) was the only recommended way to protect people after they have been exposed to Hepatitis A virus. In June 2007, U.S. guidelines were revised to allow for Hepatitis A vaccine to be used after exposure to prevent infection in healthy persons aged 1–40 years.

Persons who have recently been exposed to HAV and who have not been vaccinated previously should be administered a single dose of single-antigen Hepatitis A vaccine or IG (0.02 mL/kg) as soon as possible, within 2 weeks after exposure. The guidelines vary by age and health status:

- For healthy persons aged 12 months–40 years, single-antigen Hepatitis A vaccine at the age-appropriate dose is preferred to IG because of vaccine's advantages, including long-term protection and ease of administration, as well as the equivalent efficacy of vaccine to IG.
- For persons aged >40 years, IG is preferred because of the absence of information regarding vaccine performance in this age group and because of the more severe manifestations of Hepatitis A in older adults. Vaccine can be used if IG cannot be obtained. The magnitude of the risk of HAV transmission from the exposure should be considered in decisions to use vaccine or IG in this age group.
- For children aged <12 months, immuno-compromised persons, persons with chronic liver disease, and persons who are allergic to the vaccine or a vaccine component, IG should be used.

Persons administered IG for whom hepatitis A vaccine also is recommended for other reasons should receive a dose of vaccine simultaneously with IG. In anticipation of a private vaccine shipment, VFC providers may borrow from their VFC supply as outlined in the VFC Provider Handbook, pages 62-63. Borrowed vaccine must be paid back as soon as possible.

Testing for Hepatitis A in Symptomatic Individuals:

Providers should use their judgment when testing. However, testing is NOT recommended for anyone other than symptomatic individuals due to the possibility of false positive results. If a test is performed, an IgM anti-HAV test should be ordered to detect acute illness.