



For immediate release

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Local Residents Could Be Affected by Hepatitis A in Missoula

Residents of Lewis and Clark County who ate at the Good Food Store salad bar in Missoula in the past month may have been exposed to Hepatitis A.

Lewis and Clark Public Health encourages such individuals to be on the lookout for symptoms, which include fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, joint pain, stomach cramps, and jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes). Anyone who has questions or concerns should contact the health department at 457-8900 or seek medical care.

“There are treatments available that may prevent the disease if they’re given within two weeks of being exposed,” said Eric Merchant, administrator of the health department’s Disease Control and Prevention Division. “Anyone who ate at the Good Food Store salad bar between Aug. 15 and Sept. 13 and has never been immunized against Hep A should contact the health department or their primary health-care provider to discuss treatment options.”

The Missoula County Health Department confirmed this week that a food service employee who prepared food for the Good Food Store’s self-serve salad bar tested positive for the disease. While the employee stayed away from work during most of the time they had symptoms, Hepatitis A can be spread before a person has symptoms or realizes they’re infected.

Hepatitis A is a liver disease caused by a virus that’s spread by contaminated food and water. That’s why proper food handling, hand washing, and food handler hygiene is important in preventing its spread, Merchant said.

More information about Hepatitis A is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav/