



# Health **Alert** Network

## Tri-County Health Department

Serving Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas Counties

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John M. Douglas, Jr., M.D. Executive Director

The pages that follow contain information critical to protecting the health of your patients and the citizens of Colorado.

## HAN ADVISORY

Number of pages including cover: 4

Subject: **Advisory - Hepatitis A infections linked to frozen strawberries**

Message ID: 11/4/2016 10:00:00 AM

Recipients: HAN Community Members.

From: TRI-COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas County, Colorado

Recipient Instructions: **Tri-County Health Department is forwarding you the attached HAN. You may have already received this broadcast if you are on the CDPHE distribution list, however, we wanted to ensure you did not miss this important information. No response is required.**

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You have received this message based upon the information contained within our Health Alert Network Notification System. If you have a different or additional e-mail or fax address that you would like us to use, or if you have additional questions, call 720-200-1477.

### Categories of Health Alert Network Messages:

**Health Alert:** Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

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

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

**Info Service/Public Health Brief:** Provides general information that is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.

You may download a copy of this HAN from the TCHD website at  
<http://www.tchd.org/259/Health-Alert-Network>



**COLORADO**

**Department of Public  
Health & Environment**

Dedicated to protecting and improving the health and environment of the people of Colorado

HEALTH ALERT NETWORK BROADCAST

MESSAGE ID: 11032016 16:00

FROM: CO-CDPHE

SUBJECT: HAN Advisory - Hepatitis A infections linked to frozen strawberries

RECIPIENTS: Local Public Health Agencies / IPs / EDs / ID Physicians

RECIPIENT INSTRUCTIONS: Local Health Public Health Agencies - please forward to healthcare providers

## **HEALTH ADVISORY | Hepatitis A infections linked to frozen strawberries | Nov. 3, 2016**

Health care providers: Please distribute widely in your office

### **Key points**

- Several states, CDC, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are investigating a multistate outbreak of foodborne hepatitis A. Epidemiologic and traceback evidence indicate frozen strawberries imported from Egypt are the likely source of this outbreak.
- There currently are no known Colorado cases associated with this outbreak.
- The FDA's investigation in connection with this outbreak identified four samples of frozen strawberries that tested positive for hepatitis A. The International Company for Agricultural Production & Processing (ICAPP) has recalled all frozen strawberries and frozen strawberry products it has imported into the United States since Jan. 1, 2016. ICAPP's recalled frozen strawberries were distributed to food service establishments nationwide. The products were NOT offered for retail sale to consumers.
- Currently, CDPHE is aware of several major food distributors in Colorado who received and distributed recalled product to more than 500 facilities in the state. A broad range of facilities received recalled product (workplace cafeterias, churches, schools, universities, child cares, camps, military institutions, restaurants large and small, casinos, nursing homes, ski resorts, etc.).
- Providers might be contacted by patients who have received notice that they have been exposed to the recalled strawberries and request post exposure prophylaxis, or PEP (Hepatitis A vaccine or Immune Globulin (IG)).
- Information about this event is evolving and will be updated as necessary.

### **Background information**

#### **Information about this investigation**

Several states, CDC, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are investigating a multistate outbreak of foodborne hepatitis A. Epidemiologic and traceback evidence indicate frozen strawberries imported from Egypt are the

likely source of this outbreak. Most outbreak-related cases reside in eastern states. There are currently no hepatitis A cases in Colorado associated with this outbreak.

The FDA's investigation in connection with this outbreak identified four samples of frozen strawberries that tested positive for hepatitis A. The International Company for Agricultural Production & Processing (ICAPP) has recalled all frozen strawberries and frozen strawberry products that it has imported into the United States since Jan. 1, 2016. ICAPP's recalled frozen strawberries were distributed to food service establishments nationwide. The products were not offered for retail sale to consumers.

As of Oct. 17, 2016:

- 134 people with hepatitis A have been reported from nine states: Arkansas (1), California (1), Maryland (12), New York (3), North Carolina (1), Oregon (1), Virginia (107), West Virginia (7), and Wisconsin (1).
- 129 of these cases reported eating a smoothie containing strawberries from Tropical Smoothie Café. There have been no cases reporting illness from this same exposure since Sept. 23, 2016.
- Five cases had no exposure to Tropical Smoothie Café. The latest illness onset date among these cases was Oct. 1, 2016. The investigation into these cases is ongoing.
- 52 ill people (39% of all cases reported) have been hospitalized. No deaths have been reported.

On Friday, Oct. 28, CDPHE learned FDA had placed an import ban on frozen strawberries from an Egyptian producer, apparently related to the risk of hepatitis A contamination. Some facilities that received product from this company were notified that the product was recalled because of hepatitis A. Currently, CDPHE is aware of three food distributors in Colorado that received and distributed recalled product to more than 500 facilities in the state. A broad range of facilities received recalled product (workplace cafeterias, churches, schools, universities, child cares, camps, military institutions, restaurants large and small, casinos, nursing home, ski resorts, etc.).

Food distributors and local public health agencies are also following up with facilities to ensure they are aware of PEP recommendations for those susceptible individuals who consumed the implicated product in the last 14 days, and that recalled products are disposed of properly.

#### **Information about Hepatitis A:**

- Hepatitis A infection is caused by the hepatitis A virus.
- Incubation period: 15-50 days, with an average of 28 days.
- Signs and symptoms: Acute onset of fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, clay-colored stool, diarrhea, joint pain, jaundice.
- Infected young children typically have mild illness or are asymptomatic.
- Infected older children and adults are typically symptomatic and more than 70 percent have jaundice.
- Duration of illness: Usually less than two months, although 10 to 15 percent of symptomatic people have prolonged or relapsing disease for up to six months.
- Transmission: Infected people shed the virus in their stool two weeks prior to the onset of symptoms until up to 10 days after jaundice or symptom onset.
  - Person-to-person transmission occurs through the fecal-oral route.

- Common-source outbreaks and sporadic cases can occur from ingestion of fecally contaminated food or water.
  - Diagnosis: Serological test for IgM antibody to hepatitis A virus in persons with compatible signs and symptoms.
  - Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP): People who may have been exposed to hepatitis A virus and have never received hepatitis A vaccine and do not have a previous history of hepatitis A infection can receive PEP within 14 days of the exposure to possibly prevent infection. PEP consists of a single dose of hepatitis A vaccine or immune globulin (IG). PEP is not effective if received more than 14 days after exposure.
  - Disease control considerations: People with suspected or confirmed hepatitis A infection should be advised not to handle or prepare food for others. Cases who are food handlers (such as restaurant workers) or who work in healthcare settings should be excluded from work for seven days after onset of jaundice.
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## Recommendations / guidance

- Providers may be contacted by patients who have received notice that they have been exposed to the recalled strawberries and request Hepatitis A vaccine or Immune Globulin (IG).
  - Because hepatitis A can have serious health consequences, CDC recommends providing post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for unvaccinated people who have eaten recalled strawberries in the last two weeks. PEP consists of:
    - Hepatitis A vaccine for people between the ages of 1 and 40 years.
    - Immune Globulin (IG) for people outside of this age range (given intramuscularly, dose 0.02 mL/kg). If Immune Globulin is not available, hepatitis A vaccine can be substituted.
    - Those with evidence of previous vaccination (at least one dose) do not require PEP.
  - NOTE: CDC recommends that all children be vaccinated against hepatitis A at age 1. Any parent or caregiver who is unsure if a child has been vaccinated should consult their healthcare provider and confirm vaccination status.
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## For more information

- For more information about this investigation, visit the CDC's outbreak investigation web page:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/outbreaks/2016/hav-strawberries.htm>
- For more information about hepatitis A, visit CDC's website:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/HAV/index.htm>
- For questions about Colorado's response to this current situation, contact:  
CDPHE Communicable Disease Branch, 303-692-2700

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