



Joint Statement From Cabell-Huntington Health Department and Applebee's
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CABELL-HUNTINGTON HEALTH DEPARTMENT CONFIRMS HEPATITIS A IN FOOD SERVICE WORKER

HUNTINGTON, WV - The Cabell-Huntington Health Department (CHHD) has confirmed a case of Hepatitis A in a food service worker at Applebee's, located at 19 Mall Road, Barboursville, WV.

"While the risk of disease transmission is low, persons who have not been vaccinated against hepatitis A and who consumed food at the restaurant between May 22, 2018 and May 31st, 2018 should consider getting hepatitis A vaccine injection not more than two weeks after their exposure to help prevent infection," said Cabell County Health Officer, Dr. Michael Kilkenny. Hepatitis A vaccine is available from many health care provider offices, pharmacies, and urgent care clinics, but you should call ahead to ensure availability. CHHD has limited vaccine available for individuals without insurance who can't afford it.

The purpose of this alert is preventive; no cases resulting from exposure at the restaurant have been reported. A CHHD investigation of the restaurant has revealed no breach of safe food handling protocol. The restaurant voluntarily closed for disinfectant cleaning.

Applebee's franchisees are committed to maintaining a clean and safe environment for all guests and team members. Immediately upon learning that a team member of the 19 Mall Road location in Barboursville, West Virginia had been infected with hepatitis A from an outside source, the local franchisee closed the restaurant to thoroughly clean and sanitize it. The franchisee also worked in collaboration with the Cabell-Huntington Health Department to arrange for a clinic to vaccinate and protect all team members. The risk to guests who've visited this restaurant is very low, and the restaurant will reopen on Wednesday following final inspection by the health department on Tuesday.

-Kevin Carroll, Chief Operations Officer, Applebee's

Hepatitis A is a viral disease of the liver. It is spread from person to person by the "fecal-oral" route, often by inadequate handwashing after using the toilet or changing diapers.

Persons suspecting that they have symptoms of hepatitis should contact their health care provider. Persons working as food handlers who experience symptoms of hepatitis should not work and should be seen by a health care provider. The symptoms include nausea, loss of appetite, vomiting, fatigue, fever, abdominal cramps, dark colored urine, light or whitish-colored stools, and jaundice (a yellow color to the eyes or skin). Incubation period is two to six weeks from exposure to symptoms. Persons with questions should contact their personal health care provider or the Cabell-Huntington Health Department at (304) 523-6483.

Prevention: Thorough handwashing with soap and hot water after using the toilet and before handling food is the most important factor in preventing spread. Vaccinations are highly effective if received within 14 days of exposure.

This investigation is part of a multistate outbreak of Hepatitis A. CHHD is working closely with the WV Bureau of Public Health to address cases, contacts and immunization in high risk populations. Further information on Hepatitis A can be obtained at www.cabellhealth.org or <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav/>. An outbreak status update for Cabell County will be released June 8, 2018.

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