

MEDIA RELEASE

Chief Health Officer states low risk of Hepatitis A infection

Health Directorate Acting Chief Health Officer Dr Andrew Pengilley today encouraged anyone who has eaten food prepared at the Lyneham High School canteen between 17 October and 04 November to consider vaccination with Hepatitis A vaccine, in light of the recent case of Hepatitis A in a food handler working at the school canteen.

The Health Directorate has been made aware that some children may have visited Lyneham High School for activities, in most cases either with no or limited access to the canteen, however, information has been sent to the parents of these children.

“While we consider this to be an extremely low risk, we would like to err on the side of caution,” Dr Pengilley said.

“We advise anyone who visited the school and used the canteen during this time to discuss the matter with the Health Protection Service on (02) 6205 2155.

“ACT Health was notified of a confirmed case of Hepatitis A on Wednesday afternoon of a food handler, and an inspection of the canteen was conducted on the same day.

“The food handler worked at the Lyneham High School canteen while unknowingly infectious, and a person can be infectious for up to two weeks before definite symptoms appear.”

“We wrote to all ACT GPs and to parents of children who attended the high school with details of the virus and preventative measures yesterday.

Hepatitis A is a virus that causes inflammation of the liver. People usually make a full recovery from a Hepatitis A infection.

Symptoms of hepatitis include loss of appetite, abdominal pain and tenderness, nausea and vomiting, fever, dark urine and yellowing of the skin and eyes.

Hepatitis A vaccine is the recommended post exposure treatment to reduce the chance of people developing hepatitis A if given within 2 weeks of last exposure. The vaccine is safe and effective for adults and children.

A fact sheet on Hepatitis A and other related information is available on the ACT Health website:

www.health.act.gov.au/hepatitisa

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