

MEDIA RELEASE

Hepatitis A in a food handler

Health Directorate Acting Chief Health Officer Dr Andrew Pengilley today discussed the public health steps being taken to address an incidence of Hepatitis A at a Lyneham high school.

“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 promptly conducted on the same day,” Dr Pengilley said.

“I’d like to reassure Canberrans that Health Directorate took all immediate, appropriate and effective public health action in relation to this case, and that the risk here is strictly confined to those who have eaten from the canteen.

The Health Directorate plans to run a vaccination clinic at the High School on Monday and Tuesday, 14 and 15 November, to provide free hepatitis A vaccine to students and other staff who may have been exposed to the virus.

“The food handler worked at an ACT high school canteen while unknowingly infectious, and a person can be infectious for up to two weeks before symptoms appear.

“I have written to parents of children who attend the high school with details of the virus and preventative measures. Parents may also contact health officers at the Health Protection Service 6205 2155 to discuss any concerns.

Hepatitis A is a virus that causes inflammation of the liver and the hepatitis A infection usually causes mild disease and normally resolves on its own without treatment.

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 post exposure treatment to reduce the chance of people developing hepatitis A and is safe and effective for adults and children.

A fact sheet on Hepatitis A and other relevant information is available on the ACT Health website:
www.health.act.gov.au/hepatitisa

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Media Contact: Hasnah Scheduling 6205 0837 (w) 0417 236 835 (m)