

Hepatitis A alert – Engadine

Information for local general practitioners

Please distribute this information to all staff

Key points for GPs:

1. There is an outbreak of hepatitis A related to children who attend a childcare centre in Engadine. Two cases have occurred at the centre since March 2025, with a third case occurring in a household contact.
2. The Public Health Unit is offering hepatitis A vaccine to all children and staff at the centre to prevent further transmission.
3. Hepatitis A can be asymptomatic in small children, so spread to family members or social contacts is possible.
4. Consider hepatitis A in people presenting with symptoms of gastroenteritis accompanied by jaundice, even in the absence of known exposure.

Summary

Since March three people with links to a childcare centre in Engadine have confirmed acute hepatitis A infection. The source of the outbreak is not known. As small children may have asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic hepatitis A infection there is the potential for undetected spread within families or between small children.

The Public Health Unit is responding to the outbreak by offering hepatitis A vaccine clinics on site at the centre to all children and educators. Infants under 9 months of age have been offered normal human immunoglobulin rather than vaccine.

What should GPs look out for?

- Hepatitis A has an incubation period of 15–50 days, so cases related to this outbreak could present as late as June.
- Due to potential undetected spread amongst small children other community members may present with symptoms of acute hepatitis A:
 - fever, malaise, anorexia, nausea, vomiting, abdominal discomfort
 - followed a few days later by dark-coloured urine, light-coloured stools, jaundice and pruritis
- For locals with consistent symptoms, even in the absence of known risk factors please:
 - Collect hepatitis A serology (IgG and IgM) and liver function tests
 - Call the Public Health Unit on 9382 8333 and ask to speak with ID triage

People who have had two prior doses of hepatitis A vaccine at least 6 months apart, or prior confirmed infection, are immune and usually do not need to be tested for hepatitis A.

If asked, GPs can support parental decision to vaccinate their child by:

- Confirming the safety and effectiveness of hepatitis A vaccine in preventing hepatitis A and decreasing the risk of further transmission.
- Continuing the routine immunisation schedule on time irrespective of hepatitis A doses.
- Providing hepatitis A vaccine to children from the centre where that is parent preference; we will provide a **letter** and state funded vaccine in this circumstance.
- For parents who wish to provide their child with long-term protection against hepatitis A prescribe a privately funded second dose at least 6 months after the initial dose.

Vaccination is not being recommended in the wider community.

Factsheet: http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/Hepatitis_A.aspx

30 April 2024