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Hepatitis A diagnosed in a food worker at an Isabella County retailer

LANSING, Mich. – The Michigan Departments of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) have identified a hepatitis A infection in a bakery food worker at the Meijer store located at 1015 Pickard Street in Mt. Pleasant, Mich.

MDHHS and MDARD are working with the Central Michigan District Health Department (CMDHD) on this investigation. Persons who consumed any baked goods made on-site at the bakery department of this Meijer store between August 23 and September 20, 2017 may have been exposed to the hepatitis A virus. These baked goods will bear the Meijer Bakery label, and would include individual items such as single doughnuts and rolls from the self-serve case. Consumers with any of these products still in their home should discard them immediately. Freezing does not kill the hepatitis A virus. No Meijer stores or Meijer bakeries at other locations are affected.

No illnesses have been identified from this exposure at this time. While the risk of exposure in this situation is low, patrons should monitor for symptoms of hepatitis A infection which include sudden onset of abdominal discomfort, dark urine, fever, diarrhea, and yellow skin and eyes. CMDHD is working with Meijer to provide vaccines to any of their bakery employees and to ensure they are following recommend guidelines.

Hepatitis A vaccine or immune globulin (IG) may provide protection against the disease if given within two weeks after exposure. Those who consumed any baked goods that were purchased from this Meijer location between August 23, and September 20, 2017 should promptly contact their healthcare provider to be assessed for vaccination or IG. Hepatitis A vaccine may be available at some major pharmacies in Michigan and Meijer is offering the vaccine free of charge at its Mount Pleasant location to any Meijer employees or customers who are concerned about exposure. People who have had hepatitis A disease or previously received two doses of the hepatitis A vaccine do not need to be immunized for hepatitis A again.

Time from exposure to onset of illness (incubation period) is typically 15 to 50 days. Duration of illness typically lasts several weeks to several months. Treatment of hepatitis A is supportive, and most people will recover without complications. However, individuals who have liver disease and become infected with hepatitis A are at risk for liver failure.

While vaccination provides the best protection, frequent handwashing with soap and warm water after using the bathroom and before preparing food can help prevent the spread of hepatitis A. Appropriately cooking foods can also help prevent infection.

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Anyone who develops symptoms of hepatitis A infection should stay home and contact their healthcare provider. Residents may contact CMDHD with questions or if they require assistance in locating hepatitis A vaccine or IG.

For more information about viral hepatitis, visit www.michigan.gov/hepatitis or www.cdc.gov/hepatitis. For important information about immunizations, visit Michigan's I Vaccinate Campaign at www.ivaccinate.org.

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