



Press Release

Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department

Web: health.hamiltontn.org

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****
[August 6, 2018]

Health Department Investigates Possible Hepatitis A Exposure in Jails: Seeking Female Inmates from both Hamilton County Jail and Silverdale Detention Center

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN – The Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department is working to make contact with females who were held at the Hamilton County Jail the afternoon of Thursday, July 26, 2018, through the morning of Friday, July 27, and/or any females who were held at the Silverdale Detention Center on Friday, July 27, 2018. The Health Department is investigating a case of hepatitis A who was held in these facilities during these dates and times. The individual was only in the temporary female holding areas and not mixed in with the general jail populations at either facility.

For any females who were in the temporary holding areas of either of these facilities during these dates and times, the Health Department is offering free hepatitis A vaccine. In order for the vaccine to be most effective for these individuals, it should be given soon and NO later than August 10, 2018. A special clinic will be available today and the rest of the week from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, at the Adult/International Travel Clinic of the 3rd Street Health Department main campus. Clients do not need to bring proof of the incarceration or other documents. Individuals may also visit any of our [four other health centers](#) around the county on a walk-in basis between 8AM-4PM and get the vaccine free:

- Birchwood Health Center, 5625 Hwy 60, Birchwood TN 37308, 423-961-0446
- Homeless Health Care Center, 730 E 11th St, Chattanooga TN 37403, 423-265-5708
- Ooltewah Health Center, 5520 High St, Ooltewah TN 37363, 423-238-4269
- Sequoyah Health Center, 9527 W Ridge Trail Rd, Soddy Daisy TN 37379, 423-842-3031

Most adults have not been vaccinated against hepatitis A. The vaccine has only been routine for children entering kindergarten in the past few years.

As of August 3, 2018, twelve cases of hepatitis A have been reported in Hamilton County since May 2018. Normally, the county has 0-1 cases per year.

In the [current multi-state hepatitis A outbreak](#), the disease is occurring mainly among people who are homeless, those who use injection and non-injection drugs, men who have sex with men, and their direct contacts. Caring for someone who is ill with the disease or living in close quarters with them are also risk factors. Anyone with these risk factors may come to the Health Department and get the vaccine free.

Hepatitis A is a vaccine-preventable contagious liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus. Symptoms include fever, fatigue, nausea, loss of appetite, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark colored urine, clay-colored stools, joint pain, or jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes). It can range from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a severe illness lasting several months. Although rare, hepatitis A can cause death in some people. Hepatitis A usually spreads when a person unknowingly ingests the virus from objects, food, or drinks contaminated by small, undetected amounts of stool from an infected person. Hepatitis A can also spread from close personal contact with an infected person such as through sex or caring for someone who is ill. The best way to prevent hepatitis A is through vaccination. Other preventive measures include thorough hand washing before preparing or eating food and after changing diapers or going to the bathroom.

For more information, call 423-209-8190, or visit our [hepatitis A website](#).