HEPATITIS A & INCARCERATION

What is Hepatitis?

"Hepatitis" means inflammation or swelling of the liver. The liver is an organ in the human body that aids the body in fighting germs, cleaning blood, and digesting food.

There are five types of viral Hepatitis—Hepatitis A, B, C, D, E. This fact sheet focuses on Hepatitis A.

What is Hepatitis A?

A highly contagious liver infection caused by the Hepatitis A virus.

Nationwide Hepatitis A Outbreak

Since 2017, four states declared a Hepatitis A outbreak: California, Kentucky, Michigan, and Utah

Since January 2018 West Virginia has seen an increase in Hepatitis A cases

Hepatitis A can be spread in US jails and prisons.

Cases in West Virginia and other states have been associated with US jails and prisons.

What are the symptoms?

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Loss of Appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Gray-colored bowel movements
- Joint Pain
- Jaundice
- Dark Urine

How is Hepatitis A spread?

Hepatitis A is usually spread when a person ingests fecal matter, including microscopic amounts. This can take place, when an infected person does not wash his/her hands properly after going to the bathroom and then touches objects or food or when someone engages in sexual activities with an infected person.

Who is at risk in jails and prisons?

- Persons who use drugs, whether injected or not
- Person who had sexual contact with someone who has Hepatitis A
- Men who have sexual encounters with other men
- People who have come into close person-to-person contact with an infected person

How is Hepatitis A diagnosed?

A physician can determine if a person has Hepatitis A by discussing his/her symptoms and taking a blood sample.

Prevention

- Wash hands properly
- Do not share needles
- Get vaccinated
- Practice safe sex

For more information

Call your local health department, or go to: dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/viral-Hepatitis/pages/hepA_outbreak.aspx.

Reference: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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