



SAN MATEO COUNTY  
**HEALTH SYSTEM**

---

***PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT***

**June 4, 2013**

**To: San Mateo County Medical Providers**

**From: Communicable Disease Control, Public Health Policy & Planning Division**

---

Main number 650-573-2346 ♦ fax 650-573-2919 ♦ after-hours emergency line 650-363-4981

---

**Multistate Outbreak of Hepatitis A Infection  
Potentially Associated with a Commercial Frozen Berries Product**

**Situation:** The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and state and local health departments, including the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), are investigating an outbreak of acute hepatitis A virus (HAV) infections that appear to be associated with the consumption of Townsend Farms brand Organic Antioxidant Blend frozen berry mix sold by Costco stores.

FDA is working with Townsend Farms and Costco to investigate the likely source of the contamination, as well as the extent of distribution and specific lot codes impacted. The product has already been removed from shelves at Costco and has been recalled by Townsend Farms.

CDC has posted information about the outbreak at <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/Outbreaks/2013/A1b-03-31/index.html>, with links to hepatitis A information and advice to consumers and retailers.

**Actions requested of clinicians:**

1. **Report and test** for acute hepatitis A infection ALL patients with a clinical illness suggestive of acute hepatitis A infection. Be on the look-out for patients with no history of international travel within six months prior to illness onset, no other clear source of infection (i.e. known contact with an acute case of hepatitis A), and illness onset since April 15, 2013, especially if they have, or think they may have, consumed the implicated product from Costco. **Asymptomatic individuals should NOT be tested.**
2. **Remember that post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is recommended for those who have consumed the implicated product and are seeking medical consultation within 14 days of consumption, and are not known to have immunity to Hepatitis A (documented HAV antibody in past, OR history of previous HAV vaccination).** For detailed information regarding HAV vaccine and immunoglobulin (IG), please refer to [http://eziz.org/wp-content/uploads/CDPH\\_HAVPEPClinical-Guidance\\_May-2013.pdf](http://eziz.org/wp-content/uploads/CDPH_HAVPEPClinical-Guidance_May-2013.pdf).
3. **Educate** your patients and remind them that most children in California are vaccinated against hepatitis A and are therefore immune to the virus. The vaccine is very immunogenic. 94% of individuals are protected after one dose of the single antigen vaccine and 99% are protected after the full vaccine course (2 doses).

4. **Remind** your patients who consumed the implicated frozen product more than 14 days prior to accessing medical care and who are therefore not eligible for PEP, to monitor themselves for the appearance of the following symptoms: fever, fatigue, anorexia, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, clay-colored bowel movements, jaundice and joint pain. Of note, not all infected individuals will become symptomatic.
5. **Advise** asymptomatic individuals who still have the frozen berries product at home that they should discard it. **Symptomatic individuals with suspected viral hepatitis should turn the product in to the San Mateo County Communicable Disease Control Program for testing (recommended in confirmed cases).**
6. **Refer** persons who consumed this product within 14 days of access to medical care and who do not have a healthcare provider to the Communicable Disease Control Program, (650) 372-8572.
7. If you have **questions regarding the hepatitis A vaccine supply or how to order vaccine**, please call Robyn Ziegler of the San Mateo County Immunization program at 650-573-2878. Questions from healthcare providers regarding **IG** administration should be directed to the San Mateo County Communicable Disease Control program at 650-573-2346.

*The Communicable Disease Program is available to help meet the reporting needs of, and answer questions for, San Mateo County providers. To report a disease or outbreak, please call 650-573-2346 Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, or fax a Confidential Morbidity Report (CMR) to 650-573-2919. You may download an electronic copy of the CMR at [http://smhealth.org/sites/default/files/docs/PHS/cmr\\_cd\\_std.pdf](http://smhealth.org/sites/default/files/docs/PHS/cmr_cd_std.pdf). Web-based reporting via CalREDIE is also available. Please contact us if you would like to know more about, and sign up for, web-based reporting. Non-urgent questions and/or general inquiries may be directed to [PH\\_CDControlUnit@smcgov.org](mailto:PH_CDControlUnit@smcgov.org).*

**Categories of urgency levels:**

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate attention.