



## Hepatitis A – What Food Establishments Need to Know

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) declared a statewide outbreak of Hepatitis A in 2018. Since early 2019, Summit County has experienced an alarming increase in the number of Hepatitis A cases.

### What is Hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a contagious virus that causes liver infection. The virus is transmitted via the fecal-oral route. People can get Hepatitis A by touching contaminated surfaces then ingesting it, eating contaminated food/water, or through close contact with an infected person.

### Why Should Food Establishments be Concerned?

If a food service worker has Hepatitis A, they could transfer the virus to patrons by contaminating surfaces, utensils, or food. If recognized early, steps can be taken to prevent transmission to others.

### What Can I do to Prevent Hepatitis A?

To prevent Hepatitis A transmission, routine food safety practices must be followed. Key practices include:

- Proper and frequent handwashing.
  1. Hands must be thoroughly washed with hot water (at least 100°F) and soap, while rubbing vigorously for at least 20 seconds.
  2. Hands must be washed after using the restroom, eating, smoking, coughing, sneezing, handling trash or dirty dishes, or after any other activity that may have contaminated the hands and before handling food.
  3. Never use hand sanitizer in place of hand washing.
- No bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods.
- Review and follow your employee health policy agreement. Never come to work if you have symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, jaundice, or any other foodborne illness-like symptoms.
- Review and follow your clean-up procedure for vomit and diarrhea incidents.
- Get the Hepatitis A vaccine. Vaccination is the best way to protect yourself.

### KNOW THE SYMPTOMS OF HEPATITIS A

*Symptoms usually appear 15 to 50 days after exposure to the virus*

- Yellow skin or eyes
- Fever
- Fatigue
- Stomach pain
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Dark colored urine
- Pale colored stool

**If you think you may have Hepatitis A or have been in contact with somebody who has Hepatitis A, contact your health care provider right away.**