



# Clinical Update

## For Telephone Triage Nurses

June 2013

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Exposure from  
Frozen Berry Mix:  
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from Callers

### Hepatitis A Exposure from Frozen Berry Mix: FAQs from Callers

#### Current Outbreak:

- 97 cases of hepatitis A have been reported in 8 states (Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Washington). More cases are expected.
- The contaminated product is a Frozen Berry Mix containing different berries and pomegranate seeds.

#### Product Names:

- Townsend Farms Organic Antioxidant Blend is sold in Costco stores. All cases to date have been linked to this product.
- In East coast states, Organic Antioxidant Berry Blend is sold in Harris Teeter stores. No cases are yet linked to this product. Both products were recalled on June 3rd.

**Risk from Food:** Is eating a potentially contaminated food or drink considered an exposure?

*Answer:* Yes, it is equivalent to close contact with a patient who has hepatitis. It is a common way for this virus to spread.

**Vaccine Protection:** If the child previously received the Hepatitis A vaccine at 12 months, is she or he protected?

*Answer:* One dose gives 95% protection, 2 doses give 99% protection. If a child has received even 1 dose, the child is considered protected. Immune globulin (IG) is not needed (CDC).

**Hepatitis A Vaccine in US:** When did it become part of routine immunizations?

*Answer:* In 2006. Vaccine is given at age 12 months and again at 18 months. Therefore most children age 7 and younger are protected. Many older than that have also received catch-up vaccines, but the parent needs to check.

**Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP):** What can be given to prevent Hepatitis A after exposure?

*Answer:* Children 12 months of age and older can be protected by getting the Hepatitis A vaccine (CDC). Infants less than 12 months of age need to receive IG (CDC). Due to major shortage of IG nationwide, Public Health Departments in several states (including CO) recommend the Hepatitis A vaccine for any exposed infant over 6 months of age. This is safe and generally protective. However, the routine 2 dose series will still need to be given at 12 and 18 months of age, just as for other children. Those who are immune-compromised or have chronic liver disease do however need IG. Infants less than 6 months of age are unlikely to have eaten the berries.

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### Hepatitis A Exposure from Frozen Berry Mix: FAQs from Callers

**How Long:** How long after exposure, can prophylaxis be given and be effective?

*Answer:* up to and including 14 days.

**Triage for Exposed Child:** How quickly does the exposed child need to see their doctor for prophylaxis?

*Answer:* Within 3 days, or the next time the office is open. *Exception:* close to 14 days after exposure, needs to be seen within 24 hours.

**Cutoff:** What if it's been more than 14 days since exposure?

*Answer:* the vaccine and IG would not be helpful. Contact your doctor only if your child becomes ill in the next 6 weeks. The risk is low.

**Tests:** Does my child need any tests?

*Answer:* Children who ate frozen berry mix but do not have any symptoms, do not need any lab tests.

**Triage for Child with Symptoms:** What if my child has symptoms of hepatitis illness?

*Answer:* Rule out serious symptoms with nurse triage. All other children who have possible symptoms need to be seen within 24 hours. They may need blood tests to confirm or disprove the diagnosis of hepatitis.

**Incubation Period:** 30 days (range 15-50 days)

**Contagious Period:** 2 weeks before to 1 week after the onset of jaundice or other symptoms (nausea, fever or RUQ discomfort)

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### Reference

Answers based on review of CDC and Colorado Public Health Department websites.

See

[www.cdc.gov/hepatitis](http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis)  
for details

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