



Bartholomew County Health Department

Environmental Health/Vital Records

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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HEPATITIS A EXPOSURE AT AMAZING JOE'S GRILL

COLUMBUS—Bartholomew County health officials have confirmed a case of hepatitis A in an employee who handled food at Amazing Joe's Grill located at 2607 Central Ave., Columbus, IN. An investigation found that this employee worked while ill on 4/17, 4/18, 4/19, 4/20, 4/21, 4/22, 4/24, 4/25 and 4/26.

While it is relatively rare for restaurant patrons to become infected with hepatitis A virus due to an infected food handler, anyone who consumed food or drink at Amazing Joe's Grill in Columbus during these dates is recommended to receive a hepatitis A vaccination within 14 days of exposure as further protection from becoming ill. Amazing Joe's Grill is working closely with health officials to prevent any new cases from arising as a result of this case and the restaurant is open for business. A thorough disinfection of the restaurant was completed and the establishment was approved to reopen.

A vaccination clinic is scheduled at the Fair Oaks Mall at the old Toys-R-Us store front, 2380 25th Street, Columbus, IN for those with potential exposure to hepatitis A during the specified dates. Vaccine must be administered within two weeks after the last day of exposure. Individuals who consumed food or drink at Amazing Joe's Grill on 4/22, 4/24, 4/25 or 4/26 may receive vaccine at the public health clinic.

- Monday, May 6, 2019, 12:00 to 6:00 PM
 - 2380 25th Street, Columbus, IN

Those who can't attend the vaccination clinic during the scheduled time should contact their personal medical provider. Anyone who was exposed more than 14 days ago is advised to watch for symptoms, as vaccination will not be effective at preventing illness after that time.

Anyone who consumed food and/or drink at the Amazing Joe's on 4/17, 4/18, 4/19, 4/20, 4/21, 4/22, 4/24, 4/25 and 4/26 is also asked to:

- Monitor their health for symptoms of hepatitis A infection up to 50 days after exposure.
- Wash their hands with soap and warm water frequently and thoroughly, especially after using the bathroom and before preparing food.
- Stay at home and contact their healthcare provider immediately if symptoms of hepatitis A infection develop.

Hepatitis A is a viral infection of the liver that can cause loss of appetite, nausea, tiredness, fever, stomach pain, brown colored urine, and light colored stools. Yellowing of the skin or eyes may also appear. People can become ill up to seven weeks after being exposed to the virus. 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. The virus

spreads when an infected person does not wash his/her hands adequately after using the toilet or engages in behaviors that increase risk of infection. Careful hand washing, including under the fingernails, with soap and water, along with vaccination of anyone at risk of infection, will prevent the spread of this disease.

Indiana is one of several states experiencing a hepatitis A outbreak, so all residents are urged to consult their healthcare providers and pharmacies for a hepatitis A vaccine as preventive care. Careful handwashing with soap and running water is also recommended, especially before preparing food. Indiana law has required a hepatitis A vaccine for school admission since 2014, and the vaccine was required for students entering sixth and 12th grades in 2018, so many students have already been vaccinated.

Indiana health officials have been working to educate the public, restaurants, jails, groups that serve homeless populations and those who use illicit drugs about the outbreak and ways to prevent the disease. ISDH also provides outbreak updates on its [website](#).

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