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MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH PROVIDES UPDATE ON HEPATITIS A OUTBREAK



NORRISTOWN, PA – The [Montgomery County Office of Public Health](#) (MCOPH) today provided an update on the Hepatitis A Virus (HAV) outbreak in the county.

Of thirteen total cases of Hepatitis A under investigation, ten are confirmed and three remain suspect. Of the ten confirmed cases, seven people were hospitalized at one point in time. None currently remain hospitalized. Three deaths are linked to this outbreak.

Ongoing interviews confirmed the exposure occurred in late November and no longer presents a risk to the public.

After conducting a re-opening inspection today, MCOPH's Division of Environmental Field Services has lifted the closure of Gino's Ristorante & Pizzeria in West Norriton.

During the inspection, MCOPH emphasized the requirement of proper and thorough hand washing and glove/utensil use when handling ready-to-eat foods and provided education to the facility. Areas inspected to ensure the facility was cleaned and sanitized as instructed included the kitchen, dining room, wait stations and restrooms, all food and non-food contact surfaces.

The owner also reported that all potential food sources on the premises have been disposed of prior to re-opening. MCOPH instructed the facility to wash all produce before serving and the necessity to do so. Additional inspections will occur at Gino's to observe employee food handling procedures.

The restaurant owner provided a list of restaurant employees working during the exposure period who are expected to return to the restaurant following re-opening. All employees on the list completed voluntary testing for Hepatitis A and were offered Hepatitis A vaccination.

To view Gino's re-opening inspection report, [click here](#). Copies of all Montgomery County food establishment inspection reports can be [viewed here](#).

Food-borne illness investigations like Hepatitis A are dynamic and [involve several steps](#). MCOPH is continuing public health surveillance.

Anyone experiencing symptoms of Hepatitis A should contact their doctor. Members of the public who have questions or concerns can contact MCOPH by [filling out this survey](#).

SYMPTOMS

Not everyone with Hepatitis A has symptoms. Adults are more likely to have symptoms than children. If symptoms develop, they usually appear two to seven weeks (15-50 days), an average of 28-30 days after infection. Symptoms usually last less than two months, although some people can be ill for as long as six months.

If symptoms develop, they can include:

- Yellow skin or eyes
- Not wanting to eat
- Upset stomach
- Throwing up
- Stomach pain
- Fever
- Dark urine or light-colored stools
- Diarrhea
- Joint pain
- Feeling tired

Many people, especially children, have no symptoms but can still spread the infection. In addition, a person can transmit Hepatitis A to others up to two weeks before symptoms appear.

ABOUT HEPATITIS A

Hepatitis A is a highly contagious, vaccine-preventable, liver infection caused by the Hepatitis A Virus (HAV) ranging in severity from mild infection lasting a few weeks to severe disease lasting several months. Hepatitis A usually spreads through close, personal contact with an infected person or when a person unknowingly ingests the virus from objects, food or drinks that are contaminated by small amounts of stool (feces) from an infected person. A person infected with hepatitis A can transmit the disease to other people even if he or she does not have any symptoms of the disease.

PREVENTION OF HEPATITIS A

The best way to prevent Hepatitis A is through vaccination with the Hepatitis A vaccine. To get the full benefit of the Hepatitis A vaccine, more than one shot is needed. The number and timing of these shots depends on the type of vaccine you are given. Practicing good hand hygiene—including thoroughly washing hands after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating food—plays a key role in preventing the spread of Hepatitis A.

For a full overview of Hepatitis A, [visit the CDC website](#).

Media Contact: Kelly Cofrancisco, kcofrancisco@montcopa.org