

2023 Hepatitis A Outbreak Associated with Frozen Organic Strawberries

Last updated: 03/17/2023 - This page updated Mondays, if needed.

Status: Ongoing

Overview

On March 1, 2023, The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) began investigating a cluster of cases of hepatitis A suspected to be transmitted through food. On March 16, 2023, as a result of this investigation, scenic Fruit Company of Gresham, Oregon announced a recall of frozen organic strawberries and a frozen organic tropical fruit blend containing strawberries.

Advice to Consumers

Residents are urged to check their freezers for these recalled products and dispose of them or return them to stores where they were purchased. **Do not eat these products!**

- Kirkland Signature Organic Strawberries sold at Costco
- PCC Organic Frozen Strawberries sold at PCC Community Markets
- Vital Choice Frozen Organic Strawberries sold online at Vital Choice Seafood & Organics
- Trader Joe's Frozen Organic Tropical Fruit Blend sold at Trader Joe's

A full list of the recalled products with lot numbers and "best by" dates can be found on the FDA Recalls, Market Withdrawals & Safety Alerts DOH webpage: [visit this DOH page](#)

Investigation Details

Five Washington residents became ill with hepatitis A infection between November 24th, 2022 and December 27th, 2022. All reported eating the same brand of frozen organic strawberries during the period of time when they would have been exposed to hepatitis A.

Washington State Case Information

Case Information

Case Information	
Confirmed cases	5
Hospitalized	2
Died	0
Age range	30 to 60 years old
Sex	Female
	2

Cases by County of Residence

County	Total Cases
King	2
Kittitas	1
Snohomish	2

What Should You Do If You Ate any of the Recalled Products?

People who have been fully vaccinated for hepatitis A (two doses of vaccine separated by at least 6 months) are usually immune and will not get sick even if they ate the recalled strawberries. If you are not vaccinated and ate the recalled strawberries in the previous 50 days, you could be at risk of infection.

If you ate any of the recalled products in the previous 14 days, you may be able to receive treatment to prevent infection with hepatitis A. Contact your health care

provider immediately to let them know you ate a product in the previous 14 days that was recalled because of hepatitis A.

If you ate any of the recalled products between 15 and 50 days ago, you could be at risk for hepatitis A infection and should watch for the following symptoms.

- Feeling tired
- Low appetite
- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Nausea
- Stomach pain
- Joint pain
- Dark urine
- Pale poop
- Jaundice (yellow color to the whites of the eyes or skin)

If you ate any of the recalled products within the previous 50 days and develop symptoms of hepatitis A, contact your health care provider and let them know you ate a product that was recalled because of hepatitis A.

People with hepatitis A infection can spread the infection to others. The virus spreads through infected poop. You can get hepatitis A if you put something in your mouth (food, water, hands) that has infected poop on or in it. The item can have the virus on it even if it looks clean.

Anyone who ate any of the recalled products in the last 50 days and develops symptoms of hepatitis A should not work in or attend childcare and should not work in food service or health care until they can be assessed by a health care provider.

People who get hepatitis A usually feel better within two months, however, some people can be sick for as long as six months.

Household members of persons with hepatitis A infection should ask their health care provider about treatment to prevent hepatitis A infection.

What Can You Do To Prevent Hepatitis A?

- The best protection against hepatitis A is the [hepatitis A vaccine](#).
- Check your immunization records online through [Wa.MylR.net](#) or contact your health care provider

Some people are more likely than others to get hepatitis A. The following groups of people may be at an increased risk of hepatitis A and should get the vaccine:

- People who travel to countries with high rates of hepatitis A
 - This includes countries in Central and South America, Asia (except Japan), Africa, Eastern Europe, and Mexico. If you plan to go to one of these areas, you should get your first dose of hepatitis A vaccine at least four weeks before you travel
 - Babies six through 11 months traveling outside of the United States should get one dose. This travel dose does not count toward the series. These children should still get two doses starting at 1 year of age
- Family and close contacts of an adopted child who recently arrived from a country with high rates of hepatitis A
- People who are homeless or in unstable living situations, including shelters
- People who use drugs, either injection or non-injection
- Men who have sex with men
- People in, or recently out of jail or prison
- People who are exposed to a hepatitis A outbreak (for example, if you ate at a restaurant where a recent hepatitis A outbreak took place)
- People who live with or have sex with someone who has hepatitis A
- People with chronic liver disease
- People who work with nonhuman primates (such as monkeys) that have hepatitis A or work with hepatitis A in a research laboratory setting

If you are traveling:

- Start the hepatitis A vaccine series at least four weeks before you travel
- Babies aged six months and older should get the hepatitis A vaccine before any travel outside of the U.S.