

# Is your practice aware of CDC hepatitis A vaccination recommendations for adults?

In 1994, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that 134,000 hepatitis A infections occurred.<sup>1</sup> The introduction of the hepatitis A vaccine in 1995<sup>2</sup> helped to reduce new hepatitis A infections to a CDC-estimated 2,800 in 2011.<sup>3\*</sup>

Today, despite the CDC's recommendation that adults at risk for hepatitis A, as well as other adults seeking protection against the virus, should be vaccinated,<sup>4</sup> hepatitis A vaccination coverage in the US has been low<sup>5</sup>:

- The 2012 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) reported an estimated<sup>5</sup>:
  - 12.2% of adults age 19-49 were vaccinated against hepatitis A
  - 18.9% of adults age 19-49 who had traveled outside the US since 1995 to a country of high or intermediate hepatitis A endemicity (countries other than Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the countries of Europe) were vaccinated against hepatitis A
- In a 2011 NHIS report, an estimated 17.1% of adults age 19 to 49 with chronic liver disease were vaccinated against hepatitis A<sup>6†</sup>
- Adults who become ill with hepatitis A lose an average of 27 workdays per illness<sup>2</sup>

## CDC strategies to improve vaccination rates<sup>5</sup>

- Patient education and publicity
- Increased access to vaccination services
- Office practices shown to improve vaccination coverage:
  - Standing order programs for vaccinations
  - Reminder-recall system
  - Removal of administrative and financial barriers
  - Assessment of practice-level vaccination rates with feedback to staff

## More about hepatitis A and those at risk

### Transmission

The hepatitis A virus is transmitted via the oral-fecal route primarily through<sup>7</sup>:

- Close personal contact (sexual or household) with an infected person
- Ingestion of food or drinks contaminated with the hepatitis A virus

\* Incidence estimates are based on reported cases and adjusted for asymptomatic infection and underreporting.<sup>3</sup>

• Actual reported cases 1994: Hepatitis A (26,796)<sup>1</sup>

• Actual reported cases 2011: Hepatitis A (1,398)<sup>3</sup>

† Estimate for 2012 is not reliable because of small sample size.<sup>5</sup>

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## More about hepatitis A and those at risk (continued)

### Symptoms

The incubation period for hepatitis A is about 28 days (range: 15-50 days).<sup>2</sup> Onset of symptoms is typically abrupt<sup>2</sup> and can include one or more of the following symptoms<sup>7</sup>:

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Gray-colored bowel movements
- Joint pain
- Jaundice

### Vaccination recommendation

The CDC recommends hepatitis A vaccination in adults for<sup>4</sup>:

- Persons traveling to or working in countries that have high or intermediate rates of hepatitis A
- Men who have sex with men
- Users of illegal injection and noninjection drugs
- Persons who have occupational risk for infection (eg, work with HAV-infected primates or with HAV in a research laboratory)
- Persons who have chronic liver disease
- Persons who receive clotting factor concentrates
- Household members and other close personal contacts of adopted children newly arriving from countries with high or intermediate hepatitis A endemicity

You can help protect your patients from vaccine-preventable diseases.

**References:** **1.** Prevention of hepatitis A through active or passive immunization. Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). *MMWR*. December 27, 1996;45(RR-15). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/rr/rr4515.pdf>. Accessed May 19, 2014. **2.** Hepatitis A. In: Atkinson W, Wolfe S, Hamborsky J, eds. *Epidemiology and Prevention of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases*. 12th ed. Washington, DC: Public Health Foundation; 2011:101-114. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/pinkbook/downloads/hepa.pdf>. Accessed May 19, 2014. **3.** Viral hepatitis surveillance. United States, 2011. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/Statistics/2011Surveillance/PDFs/2011HepSurveillanceRpt.pdf>. Accessed May 19, 2014. **4.** Recommended adult immunization schedule. United States – 2014. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/downloads/adult/adult-combined-schedule.pdf>. Accessed May 19, 2014. **5.** Noninfluenza vaccination coverage among adults – United States, 2012. *MMWR*. February 7, 2014;63(05):95-102. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6305a4.htm>. Accessed May 16, 2014. **6.** Noninfluenza vaccination coverage among adults – United States, 2011. *MMWR*. February 1, 2013;62(04):66-72. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/wk/mm6204.pdf>. Accessed June 13, 2014. **7.** The ABCs of hepatitis. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/Resources/Professionals/PDFs/ABCTable.pdf>. August 2012. Accessed May 19, 2014.

**Identify and talk with your adult patients who may benefit from hepatitis A vaccination.**



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