

## HEPATITIS A

DATE OF EXPOSURE: \_\_\_\_\_

### NOTICE TO PARENTS

Your child may have been exposed to Hepatitis A, a viral disease affecting the liver. The virus is primarily found in the feces. Hepatitis A is generally a mild illness in young children.

School policy excludes children with hepatitis A from day care, preschool or Kindergarten for one week after the jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes) **and** until the child is well enough to resume normal activity, as determined by the child's health care provider. Older children are excluded for one week after jaundice and until the physician releases them.

Young children in day care or preschool or Kindergarten may spread the infection easily among themselves with minimal symptoms resulting. Often the first sign of an outbreak of hepatitis A in a setting where there are young children is the diagnosis of adult caretakers or parents with the illness.

CAUSATIVE AGENT: Hepatitis A virus

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS: If present, may include abdominal discomfort, loss of appetite, and sometimes nausea and vomiting, fever and joint pain. Jaundice (yellowing of skin and eyeballs) and dark colored urine (like tea) and pale stools may occur. Symptomatic infection only occurs 30% of the time in children younger than 6 years old. Among older children and adults, infection is usually symptomatic and lasts several weeks, with jaundice occurring in about 70% of the cases.

INCUBATION PERIOD: 15 to 50 days, with an average of 25-30 days.

PERIOD OF COMMUNICABILITY: From about two weeks before onset of symptoms occur until one week after symptoms present.

METHOD OF TRANSMISSION: Fecal-oral. Food (or water) contaminated with fecal matter from an infected person. In young children infection can be caused by hand to mouth contact with an infected child or object.

PREVENTION: Hand washing before eating and after diapering or toileting. In certain situations, the Health Department may recommend a shot of immune globulin (gamma globulin) to the persons deemed by the Health Department to have been exposed. **You will be notified if this is recommended.**

Hepatitis A vaccine is given for pre-exposure protection prior to travel, and is not yet recommended for prevention of hepatitis A after exposure.

For more information contact your health care provider, your School Nurse or Marin county Health Department or: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis>