



"Your Local
Health Department"

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NEWS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Frozen Strawberry Recall and Hepatitis A

Coldwater, MI. The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency is working closely with the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) on a nationwide recall of frozen strawberries that were contaminated with Hepatitis A. The recall was issued on October 30th. On November 3, 2016, the tri-county health department received information that local food establishments and organizations within the health jurisdiction may have received a delivery of these contaminated strawberries. No frozen strawberries were sold directly to consumers.

MDARD provided local health departments with a list of establishments that may have received the product. Health department employees conducted follow-up interviews with these organizations and have confirmed that 2 food establishments may have served the product during the past 14 days. In addition, other food establishments in surrounding counties may also have served food items made with these products. A list of food establishments that have served the recall product, organized by county, has been published on the MDARD website and can be viewed by going to: http://www.michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125-50772_51097-397016--,00.html. At this time, the health department is not aware of any cases of Hepatitis A within the three counties that are linked to frozen strawberry consumption.

Hepatitis A is a contagious liver disease that is a result of infection by the Hepatitis A virus. Symptoms can range in severity from mild illness, lasting a few weeks, to severe illness, lasting several months. Symptoms include:

- Fatigue
- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Abdominal pain
- Jaundice (yellowing of eyes and skin)
- Abnormal liver tests
- Dark urine
- Pale stool

Onset of illness occurs within 15 to 50 days of exposure to the virus, with the average onset occurring within 28 to 30 days. Anyone with symptoms of Hepatitis A should contact their healthcare provider immediately.

Val Newton, Prevention Services Director for the tri-county health department states “Hepatitis A can be prevented by vaccination. The vaccine can also help prevent illness from exposure to Hepatitis A contaminated food, if given within the first two weeks after consuming the contaminated item. Once fully immunized, your risk for contracting the disease decreases substantially.” Hepatitis A vaccination as a post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is recommend for people ages 1 to 40 years and for those who cannot obtain the Hepatitis A immunoglobulin.

If you have frequented one of the establishments listed on the MDARD website, the health department recommends checking on your immunization status for Hepatitis A through your healthcare provider or your county’s health department office.

Hepatitis A was added to the children’s recommended schedule of vaccinations in 2004 and is recommended for everyone. The health department has limited quantities of Hepatitis A vaccine for children and adults. It offers free immunizations for children up to age 19 years, who are uninsured, receive Medicaid health insurance or who lack vaccine coverage, through the Vaccines for Children Program. Hepatitis A vaccine is also available free of charge for adults, 19 years and older, who lack health insurance or vaccine coverage, through the Michigan Vaccine Replacement Program. Call the health department to learn if you qualify for these programs and/or to set up an appointment.

For more information about Hepatitis A, immunizations, or how the health department is working to protect the community’s health, please visit our website at www.bhsj.org.

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