



# Public Health Emergency

## Hepatitis A



On October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017, Governor Brown issued a proclamation declaring a State of Emergency in California due to the ongoing outbreak of hepatitis A. Hepatitis A is a communicable disease of the liver caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV). Symptoms may include fatigue, nausea, vomiting, fever, jaundice, stomach pain, dark urine, and loss of appetite. HAV can be spread through exposure to contaminated food or water and close personal contact via the fecal-oral route (i.e. ingestion of something that has been contaminated with the feces of an infected person). To date, 644 cases and 21 deaths have been attributed to the current outbreak.

Food manufacturers must take reasonable measures and precautions to ensure disease control in their establishments. Below are some examples.



- **Thorough hand washing practices** – Employees must thoroughly wash hands with soap and water
  - a. before starting work,
  - b. after each absence from their workstation,
  - c. at any other time their hands may have become soiled or contaminated.NOTE: Alcohol based-hand sanitizers are not effective against HAV.
- **Exclude sick workers** – Employees who are sick or appear to be sick must not come into contact with food, food-contact surfaces, or food-packaging.
- **Encourage self-reporting of illnesses** – Company management should encourage employees to report their own illnesses to their supervisors. To foster an environment of self-reporting, employees can be given alternate work assignments (i.e. away from direct food handling).
- **Effective cleaning of food contact surfaces** – All food contact surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized as often as necessary to prevent the food from becoming contaminated.
- **Regular sanitation and maintenance of non-food contact surfaces** – Restrooms, door handles, switches, and any other surfaces on equipment often touched by employees should be regularly cleaned and sanitized.

For additional information about this ongoing outbreak, please visit the [CDPH Immunization Branch](#).