

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Ron DeSantis
Governor

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

May 15, 2019

Dear Parent or Guardian:

This letter is to inform parents of the current acute hepatitis A outbreak in Florida. Since 2018, an increase in cases of hepatitis A infection have been identified throughout the state. During this time, the state has seen over 1,500 cases of hepatitis A and the number continues to rise. Pasco County has been identified as one of the top five impacted counties in Florida.

Although most of the hepatitis A cases seen throughout the state have been in unvaccinated adults with varying risk factors, unvaccinated children are at risk as well. This is a great opportunity to review your child's vaccination records to ensure they have received two doses of hepatitis A vaccine. The vaccine is a two-dose series, (six months apart) and is not required for school entry; therefore, your child may or may not have received it during their routine childhood immunizations.

If your child does not have two doses of vaccine, they can receive the vaccine from their pediatrician or from any of the three health department sites in Pasco County. Parents are encouraged to check their own vaccination records, as well. Please see the backside of the document for location, hours and contact numbers.

Hepatitis A is caused by a virus. Touching objects contaminated with feces (poop) of an infected person and then touching the mouth or food is a common way that this infection is spread. Hepatitis A symptoms generally begin about 28 days (range 15 to 50 days) after a person is infected, and include:

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Abdominal pain
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Dark urine
- Clay colored stools
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes)

If your child becomes ill with the above symptoms, keep your child home from school and call your healthcare provider. You can show your health care provider this letter for reference.

In addition to vaccination, the most important measure for preventing spread of many illnesses is good hand washing. Everyone should wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after bathroom visits and before handling food or eating. Hand sanitizers are not effective against hepatitis A.

If you or your doctor have any questions, please contact the DOH-Pasco Epidemiology Program at (352) 521-1450 option 2.