

Benton-Franklin Health District
www.bfhd.wa.gov

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Benton-Franklin Health District Website
www.bfhd.wa.gov

Washington Department of Health
www.doh.wa.gov

Centers for Disease Control
www.cdc.gov

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FORMER FRANKLIN COUNTY INMATE HAS HEPATITIS A

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 26, 2019

KENNEWICK — A former Franklin County inmate has tested positive for hepatitis A. She was incarcerated in the Franklin County jail in September, after which she returned to Spokane. Washington State is experiencing a hepatitis A outbreak in multiple counties, including Spokane; this is the first case linked to our area.

Hepatitis A is a very contagious liver infection caused by the hepatitis A virus. It can be a mild or severe illness lasting from a few weeks to several months. Hepatitis A is usually spread person-to-person when someone accidentally consumes stool (poop) of someone with hepatitis A or by consuming food or water contaminated with the virus.

The Health District is working with the Franklin County Sheriff's Department to identify other women who were held at the jail during the same time period and who may have been exposed. Women who were held at the jail in September are asked to call Benton-Franklin Health District (BFHD) at 509-460-4200. Staff will review the dates of incarceration and immunization status. Vaccines will be available to those who may have been exposed and who are not immunized.

BFHD's environmental health staff are also consulting with the jail on post-exposure sanitation.

The best way to prevent hepatitis A is by getting vaccinated with two doses of the hepatitis A vaccine. Vaccination is recommended for all children starting at 1 year of age, for travelers to certain countries, and for people at high risk for infection with the virus.

You can also help prevent the spread of hepatitis A by washing your hands for 20 seconds with soap and warm water after using the bathroom, after changing a diaper, and before preparing food.

To learn more about the hepatitis A outbreak in Washington, go to <https://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/Immunization/DiseasesandVaccines/HepatitisADisease/HepatitisA2019>

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