

## Benton-Franklin Health District

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### FORMER FRANKLIN COUNTY INMATE HAS HEPATITIS A

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.

The groups at highest risk of getting and spreading hepatitis A include people experiencing unstable housing or homelessness, people who use drugs, people who are or were recently in jail or prison, and gay or bisexual men. Since your staff encounters people in these risk areas, they are encouraged to review their immunization records and ensure that they are up-to-date on their vaccines.

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 feces of someone with hepatitis A or by consuming food or water contaminated with the virus.

The best way to prevent hepatitis A is by getting vaccinated with two doses of the hepatitis A vaccine. The vaccine is available from healthcare providers, pharmacies, and the Benton-Franklin Health District. Vaccine records can be obtained for immunizations that were entered in the state immunization registry from the Benton-Franklin Health District for a \$5 fee or for free on <http://www.MylR.net>. Healthcare providers will also have records of vaccines they have administered.

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>