

Friday 13 October 2017

Hep A warning issued to patrons at Sydney restaurant

NSW Health is warning recent visitors to Sokyō restaurant at The Star in Sydney that a staff member has been diagnosed with hepatitis A.

Dr Vicky Sheppard, Director of Communicable Diseases at NSW Health, said the risk of anyone developing the infection is considered low and there is no ongoing risk to other diners.

However, Dr Sheppard said anyone who dined at Sokyō during the evening of the dates specified may have been exposed to hepatitis A and should visit their GP if concerned:

- 20-24 September
- 26 and 27 September
- 29 September to 2 October
- 4-8 October.

Authorities believe the food handler acquired the infection overseas during a recent holiday, and the case is not related to the ongoing outbreak of hepatitis A in Sydney.

The NSW Food Authority confirmed processes and hygiene systems at Sokyō are robust and the restaurant will continue operating uninterrupted.

“There is a safe and effective hepatitis A vaccine available through GPs for those who are worried,” Dr Sheppard said.

“But the hepatitis A vaccination is not considered necessary on the basis of this low risk exposure.”

Hepatitis A is a viral infection of the liver. The first symptoms are usually loss of appetite, nausea, fever and stomach pains, followed several days later by dark urine, pale stools and yellowing of the skin (jaundice).

There is no specific treatment for hepatitis A. But two doses of hepatitis A vaccine, six months apart, provides lifetime protection against this infection.

“Most people with hepatitis A in Australia catch the infection overseas, through eating contaminated food, drinking contaminated water or coming into direct contact, including sexual contact, with an infectious person,” Dr Sheppard said.

“NSW Health is grateful for the cooperation of Sokyō while assessing the situation and assisting in the prevention of any further risk for staff or patrons.”

People are encouraged to visit the [NSW Health website](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au) for more information. Sokyō patrons may contact their local public health unit on 1300 066 055 or their local GP if they have any further questions or concerns.