

HEPATITIS A ALERT

Information for NSW General Practitioners

Please distribute this information to all staff

Key points for GPs:

1. Creative Gourmet frozen pomegranate has been recalled due to a link with an outbreak of hepatitis A
2. Patients who have consumed the frozen pomegranate and are WELL do not require testing
3. Patients who have consumed frozen pomegranate and HAVE SYMPTOMS of hepatitis should be tested with hepatitis A serology
4. Suspected cases of hepatitis A should be notified to the local public health unit so that timely prophylaxis of contacts can be provided

Summary

Public health investigation of an outbreak of locally-acquired hepatitis A during February and March 2018 is linked to eating frozen pomegranate arils purchased from Coles during the incubation period. The "Creative Gourmet" brand of imported frozen pomegranate has now been recalled.

Advice for patients

- Frozen pomegranate purchased from Coles should not be consumed. They can be returned for a refund to the place of purchase or discarded.
- The risk to individuals who have eaten the frozen pomegranate of acquiring hepatitis A is likely to be low, however it is important that they look out for symptoms of hepatitis and seek testing if symptoms develop
- People who have eaten the frozen pomegranate and are well should pay close attention to hand hygiene for seven weeks after they have last ate the pomegranate
- Testing is **not** indicated for asymptomatic patients

Patient investigation

- If patients present with symptoms of hepatitis, investigate as usual, and ask about frozen pomegranate consumption and include hepatitis A IgM and IgG serology
- Advise patients to not prepare food, provide personal care for others, have sex, or donate blood
- Contact your local public health unit on 1300 066 055 immediately to assist with patient assessment and arrange prophylaxis for their close contacts, and to consider other public health control measures

Vaccination

- Certain groups, including people with pre-existing liver disease should be routinely vaccinated against hepatitis A (see Australian Immunisation Handbook)
- Two doses of hepatitis A vaccine (with at least 6 month interval) confer lifetime protection
- Infection can be prevented if hepatitis A vaccine (or in special situations immunoglobulin) is administered within 2 weeks of first exposure - seek PHU advice on 1300 066 055.



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Further Information: http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/Hepatitis_A.aspx