



Southeastern Idaho Public Health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SOUTHEASTERN IDAHO PUBLIC HEALTH WARNS PUBLIC

OF POSSIBLE HEPATITIS A EXPOSURE AT POCATELLO RESTAURANT

Patrons of Tom's Gyro, 150 N. 3rd Ave., in Pocatello may have been exposed to Hepatitis A during August 2nd-August 14th, as an employee there has been confirmed as having the disease. Currently, there is no evidence of a hepatitis A outbreak associated with Tom's Gyros. **While the risk to public health is low**, the possibility exists that Tom's Gyro patrons could have been exposed to hepatitis A. Tom's Gyro has cooperated fully with the investigation into the situation. The employee is believed to have practiced good hand hygiene but could have inadvertently contaminated food and drinks at the restaurant. The risk of exposure is considered small, but not zero.

Southeastern Idaho Public Health is recommending that those persons who are not immune to hepatitis A (due to previous vaccination or previous illness) and who have eaten food or drink at Tom's Gyro between August 2nd-August 14th receive hepatitis A vaccine or immune globulin (IG) immediately. In addition, anyone who has consumed food or drink at Tom's Gyro from July 15th-August 2nd should contact their medical provider if they are exhibiting any symptoms of hepatitis (please see below).

Hepatitis A vaccine and IG are available through most medical providers. In addition, Southeastern Idaho Public Health will have hepatitis A vaccine and immune globulin (IG) available for people directly affected by this potential exposure. Please call Southeastern Idaho Public Health's hotline at 234-5888 to be screened and to make an appointment, if appropriate. It is important to know that if you have had a hepatitis A vaccine or have had the illness in the past, *you are protected from hepatitis A infection*. Please consider the following when deciding to call to make an appointment:

- If you consumed food or drink at Tom's Gyro between August 2nd-14th, you can benefit from the vaccine, which is very effective in preventing illness. The vaccine is recommended for children and adults from the ages of 12 months to 40 years of age who are not pregnant, immune-compromised or have chronic liver disease.
- If you are over 40 years of age, pregnant, immune-compromised, have chronic liver disease or are an infant under 12 months of age, and ate or drank at Tom's Gyro August 2nd-14th, immune globulin (IG) is available for prevention of infections.

- Because neither the hepatitis A vaccine, nor the immune globulin, will protect you if you ate or drank at Tom's Gyro before August 2nd you should watch for symptoms of hepatitis A (please see below). If you experience symptoms, please contact your medical provider.

Hepatitis A is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus. Hepatitis A can affect anyone. Hepatitis A virus is usually spread by eating or drinking food items that have been contaminated with hepatitis A from someone who hasn't properly washed their hands after using the bathroom.

Symptoms usually occur abruptly and may include:

- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Abdominal discomfort
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin & eyes)
- Tiredness
- Nausea
- Dark urine

Good personal hygiene and proper sanitation can help prevent hepatitis A. Outbreaks of hepatitis A are relatively uncommon in the United States; however, when they occur, public health efforts are required to control the spread of the disease.

For more information on hepatitis A, please visit Southeastern Idaho Public Health's website at www.siphidaho.org or call 234-5888.