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PASCO AND PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENTS ARE WORKING TOGETHER TO VACCINATE RESIDENTS AGAINST HEPATITIS A



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Pasco County, Fla. – The Florida Departments of Health (DOH) in Pasco and Pinellas Counties are teaming up to offer free hepatitis A vaccine to adults on Saturday, August 17 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul Roman Catholic Church. The address is 4843 Mile Stretch Dr. in Holiday. The Departments will also be offering free HIV and hepatitis C rapid testing at this outreach event. Results will be available in 20 minutes.

On August 1, 2019, Florida Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees [declared a Public Health Emergency](#) to address the increase in hepatitis A cases in Florida due to the current national outbreak. DOH has been diligently working with community partners to educate and vaccinate as many residents as possible to prevent further spread of hepatitis A.

The outreach event planned for August 17 has been a collaborative effort, with many participants, including:

- Coalition for the Homeless of Pasco County
- Joining Hands Mission
- Metropolitan Ministries
- Pasco County Emergency Management
- Pasco County Human Services
- Pasco County Media Relations and Communications
- Pasco County Public Transportation
- Pasco County Sheriff's Office
- Salvation Army
- St. Vincent de Paul Roman Catholic Church

Vaccination is the best way to prevent hepatitis A. People who should be vaccinated for hepatitis A include:

- All children at age 1 year
- People who are experiencing homelessness
- Users of recreational drugs, whether injected or not
- Men who have sexual encounters with other men
- People with direct contact with others who have hepatitis A
- Travelers to countries where hepatitis A is common
- People with chronic or long-term liver disease, including hepatitis B or hepatitis C
- People with clotting-factor disorders
- Family and caregivers of adoptees from countries where hepatitis A is common

What is Hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a highly contagious disease that attacks the liver. People infected with hepatitis A are most contagious from two weeks before onset of symptoms to one week afterwards. Not everyone who is infected will have all the symptoms. Symptoms usually start within 28 days of exposure to the virus with a range of 15-50 days. Symptoms can include:

- Jaundice (yellowing skin and whites of eyes)
- Fever
- Diarrhea
- Fatigue/tired
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea and vomiting
- Stomach pain
- Dark-colored urine
- Pale or clay colored stool

How is Hepatitis A Infection Prevented or Treated?

- Practicing good hand hygiene – including thoroughly washing hands with soap and water after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating food – plays an important role in preventing the spread of hepatitis A.
- **Hepatitis A vaccine is the best method of preventing infection.**
- No medicines can cure the disease once symptoms appear.
- **People with hepatitis A symptoms should seek medical care immediately.**
- Most people get better over time but may need to be hospitalized.
- Previous infection with hepatitis A provides immunity for the rest of a person's life.
- People that are exposed to hepatitis A may be given vaccine or immune globulin within 14 days of exposure to prevent infection.

DOH has established a hotline for people who may have questions about hepatitis A. The number to call for Pasco County is 727-619-0400, and the number to call for Pinellas County is 727-824-6932.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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