

## Costco Food Product Recall associated with Hepatitis A Cases and Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) Immunization Recommendations

**Attention:** Physicians, Long-Term Care Homes, Rest and Retirement Homes, Emergency Departments, Nurse Practitioners, Infection Control Practitioners, Occupational Health Professionals, Walk-In Clinics/Urgent Care Clinics, Midwives, Family Health Teams, RICN, Child Care Centres, Pharmacies

**Date:** April 19, 2016

### Situation to date:

On April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) posted a Food Recall warning related to Nature's Touch brand Organic Berry Cherry Blend from the marketplace due to possible Hepatitis A contamination. This recall applies to Organic Berry Cherry Blend products that are available in 1.5kg (3.3 lb) bags with best before dates up to, and including March 15, 2018. These products have the UPC code 8 73668 00179 1. CFIA is advising consumers to not consume the recalled product. The recalled product has been sold exclusively at Costco warehouse locations in Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

A copy of this information should be directed to your dietary departments to ensure that the facility food supply has been checked, and any affected product is identified and removed from service. Food contaminated with Hepatitis A virus will not look or smell spoiled.

Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), in collaboration with affected provinces, including Ontario, are investigating a **hepatitis A outbreak linked to frozen berries**. There are currently 13 cases in Canada (ON: 10, NL: 1, QC: 2). At this time, SMDHU has not been notified of any local cases of Hepatitis A.

Costco has contacted all its customers who purchased the recalled product via automated phone calls. **Costco is offering Hepatitis A vaccine to customers who have eaten the product in the last 14 days in order to decrease the risk of Hepatitis A. The vaccination is available at the Barrie Costco Pharmacy and other Ontario Costco stores. There is a clinic being offered daily at the Barrie Costco location this week from 12:00pm to 8:30pm. Costco has also indicated that it will reimburse to customers the cost of one dose of the vaccine, if affected customers receive the vaccine through a health care provider.**

**For a list of Costco vaccination clinics and the recall notice, please go to Costco's product recall website and look for the relevant recall at <http://www.costco.ca/product-notices.html> or call the local Costco.**

Publicly-funded Hepatitis A vaccine can be ordered by health care providers for this recall through the Vaccine Preventable Disease (VPD) team by calling and leaving a message on our Vaccine Order Line at 705-721-7520 ext. 8808. Please leave the following information:

- Name of your facility
- The health unit office you pick your vaccine orders up from
- Name of contact person for this order
- Phone number for the contact person if questions about this order
- The client's initials and date of birth for whom the vaccine is being ordered for

The health unit will expedite these orders.

## Indications for Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)

If the product was consumed within the last 14 days PEP is recommended as follows:

- **Everyone 1 year of age and over should be offered hepatitis A vaccine as soon as possible (unless contraindicated or fully immunized in the past – see below for definition of fully immunized).** It is recommended that monovalent vaccine be used as it has a more robust immune response required for PEP efficacy.
- **Hepatitis A vaccine is not authorized for children less than 1 year of age. Options for this age group include:**
  - Off label use of hepatitis A vaccine from 6 months to 1 year of age
  - Immune globulin, particularly if they attend a child care centre
  - No intervention except careful attention to hygiene when diapering etc. to prevent fecal oral spread
- Individuals with a contraindication to hepatitis A vaccine (e.g., allergic reaction to hepatitis A vaccine), should be referred to their primary care provider for assessment regarding immune globulin.
- **For pregnant women**, the vaccine has not been studied in clinical trials, but because the vaccine is prepared from inactivated viruses, no risk to the developing fetus is anticipated. Given that there have been hepatitis A cases associated with the food recall, the benefits likely outweigh the risks and can be recommended to them.
- **Individuals with chronic liver disease should be:**
  - Offered hepatitis A vaccine if within two weeks of last exposure (unless contraindicated or fully immunized in the past – see below for definition of fully immunized);
  - **Serum immune globulin should be considered in addition to the vaccine within three weeks of last exposure for those who have more severe chronic liver disease to ensure more protection. Note that immune globulin can only be obtained and administered in hospitals, but does not need to be provided at the same time as the vaccine.** However, hospitals generally do not stock supply but may be able to obtain it as quickly as a few hours. Therefore, it would be recommended that the health care provider call the CD Team at the health unit, 705-721-7520 ext. 8809 to coordinate with local emergency departments obtaining immune globulin.
  - Advised to consult their health care provider if within six weeks of exposure (i.e., a maximum incubation periods) for monitoring

For those previously vaccinated with hepatitis A vaccine:

- If two previous doses were provided, no additional doses are recommended.
- If one dose was provided less than 6 months ago, no additional doses are recommended until at least 6 months from the last dose.
- If one dose was provided 6 months or more in the past, one additional dose is recommended.

## Disease Process:

Typically, hepatitis A is an acute, self-limiting liver infection. Clinical presentation varies with age. Infection is usually asymptomatic in children, and jaundice develops in < 10% of children 6 years and under. Symptoms may start 15 to 50 days after the contaminated food is eaten and usually resolve on their own.

Typically, acute clinical illness is characterized by:

- 1 to 7 day prodrome of abrupt onset fever, malaise, anorexia, nausea and abdominal pain followed by jaundice.
- Dark urine and light-colored stools, as well as pruritus may occur, and an enlarged liver may be seen.
- Extra-hepatic complications may occur.
- It has been reported that between 3% and 20% of cases may experience relapsing disease.
- Fulminant hepatitis and death are rare. There is usually complete recovery without complications or sequelae. Chronic infection is not known to occur.

**Testing recommendations:**

Serology tests indicating IgM anti-HAV antibodies confirms recent infection. Antibodies are generally detectable in serum 5-10 days after infection and usually decrease to undetectable levels within 6 months after onset of infection. In rare cases, they may persist for longer. Detection of IgG antibodies signals recovery from acute Hepatitis A infection. When IgG antibodies are detected alone they indicate some level of immunity either from past infection or previous immunization. "Total hepatitis A virus antibody" (total IgM and IgG antibody) is not a confirmatory test for acute HAV infection but is used as an initial screening test in some laboratories. For further information about Hepatitis A IgM and IgG human diagnostic testing, contact the Public Health Ontario Laboratories or refer to the Public Health Ontario Laboratory Services webpage:

[http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/ServicesAndTools/LaboratoryServices/Pages/Hepatitis\\_A\\_Diagnostic\\_Serology.aspx#.VxT6K45VhXs](http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/ServicesAndTools/LaboratoryServices/Pages/Hepatitis_A_Diagnostic_Serology.aspx#.VxT6K45VhXs)

If you have this product please immediately remove the product from service or sale, and please contact the Public Health Inspector or our Health Connection line (705) 721-7520 or toll free 1 (877) 721-7520. For further information regarding hepatitis A or to coordinate access to immunoglobulin please contact the Communicable Diseases team at (705) 721-7520 ext. 8809.