

5 July 2019

Dear Parent/Carer,

Cases of Hepatitis A linked to Outwood Academy, Ripon

We are writing to update you on the outbreak of Hepatitis A.

Since our last update a week ago, there has been one new case of Hepatitis A connected to Outwood Academy bringing the total to 20. As the number of cases is continuing to fall no further action is planned at this time and the situation will continue to be monitored closely.

An additional 7 cases of Hepatitis A have been confirmed in the wider community since 19 June and it has been confirmed that all cases were in the Ripon area prior to their infection. The source of illness and any potential common links between these cases remains under investigation. PHE and other partners are raising awareness of the symptoms, so you can expect to see further media coverage around this in the coming days.

May I take this opportunity to remind you of the health advice from Public Health England:

- Hepatitis A is a viral infection which affects the liver and is a different disease from Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C.
- We understand that the confirmation of further cases in the community may be of concern, but it's important to stress that the risk remains low.
- NHS services are identifying cases of Hepatitis A and providing care promptly and those affected are recovering. Their household contacts are being followed up to reduce the risk of the infection spreading.
- Hepatitis A is usually a mild illness, though it can be more serious in adults. GPs in North Yorkshire remain vigilant to further cases.
- Hepatitis A is passed from person to person by eating food or drinking water containing the virus. Local food businesses are reminded of importance of good food practices and hygiene standards. The virus can spread easily within families and where people live closely together. Public Health England have asked me to stress the importance of hand hygiene as the simplest and easiest way to avoid the spread of infection.
- **It's really important that everyone, especially young children, ensure they wash their hands, particularly after going to the toilet and before preparing food.** If a person has, or is suspected to have, Hepatitis A it is also very important that they prevent the spread of the infection by avoiding handling and preparing food for others.

- Symptoms to be aware of, in particular, include jaundice (a condition which causes the skin and the whites of the eyes to turn yellow). This could indicate infection with Hepatitis A. Anyone developing symptoms should contact their GP or NHS 111 for advice. Other symptoms of Hepatitis A include:
 - Mild fever
 - Joint and muscle pain
 - Feeling and being sick
 - Diarrhoea
 - Loss of appetite
 - Stomach pain
 - Dark-coloured urine
 - Itchy skin
 - Not everyone infected will have all these symptoms.
- Anyone with suspected hepatitis A infection should not attend school or work until their doctor advises return. This is usually for a period of one week.
- People are urged **not** to contact GPs if they remain well.
- General information on Hepatitis A can be found at www.nhs.uk or by phoning NHS 111.

For more information on hepatitis A go to <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Hepatitis-A/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

We would like to thank all parents, staff and students for their continued support and understanding through this outbreak and we wish everybody affected well in their recovery.

Yours sincerely

Mrs G Trattles
Principal

