

NEWS RELEASE

Sherlita Amler, MD, Commissioner, Dept of Health
Ned McCormack, Communications Director
Contact: Caren Halbfinger (914) 813-5013 / after hours: 813-5000

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 10, 2017

HEPATITIS A EXPOSURE AT A SLEEPY HOLLOW COUNTRY CLUB Preventive Treatment Being Made Available

The Westchester County Department of Health recommends that individuals who ate or drank at the Sleepy Hollow Country Club between Oct. 27th and Nov. 4th receive preventive treatment against Hepatitis A, a viral illness that affects the liver. The health department learned late last night that an employee with the illness worked in the club's Grill Room while infectious.

In recent weeks five people were diagnosed with hepatitis A that was traced to an exposure at bartaco, a Port Chester restaurant. The health department's investigation shows that the country club employee was apparently infected by one of the five people who were exposed at bartaco.

The health department will offer free preventive treatment today, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. and tomorrow, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the county clinic, **134 Court Street in White Plains** for people who ate or drank at Sleepy Hollow Country Club during this period. While the greatest risk is to those who ate or drank at the Grill Room, in an abundance of caution, the health department recommends preventive treatment for anyone who ate or drank at the club between Oct. 27th and Nov. 4th.

To speed the process, register in advance, wear short sleeves and have your registration number handy when it is your turn. To register, go to www.health.ny.gov/gotoclinic/60. If you do not have internet access or need more information, call 211 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Country club patrons with exposure also can be treated by their own health care provider.

Today is the last day for preventive treatment for people who ate or drank at the club on Oct. 27th. People who ate or drank at the club on Oct. 28th or 29th should seek treatment today or tomorrow, because preventive treatment is only effective if given within two weeks of exposure.

Those who dined from Oct. 27 through Nov. 4 need to receive preventive treatment within two weeks of their exposure. The health department will provide free preventive treatment next week. Check back periodically with the link above for additional days and times.

Anyone with a prior history of Hepatitis A vaccination or Hepatitis A infection does not need to be treated.

The health department will offer Hepatitis A vaccine to most people. Infants under one year of age and people

with immune-compromising conditions will be given immune globulin. Preventive treatment will be provided at 134 Court Street in White Plains as follows:

- Today, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- Tomorrow, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Anyone under 18 years of age must be accompanied by a parent/guardian to provide consent.

The Westchester County Department of Health is also informing people who ate or drank at the club between October 21st and 26th that they may also have been exposed to Hepatitis A. While these individuals are outside the window to receive preventive treatment, they should contact their health care provider immediately if they experience symptoms so that anyone they may have exposed can receive preventive treatment.

“Hepatitis A is generally a mild illness whose symptoms include fatigue, fever, poor appetite, abdominal pain, diarrhea, dark urine, light colored stool and jaundice, which is the yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes” said Dr. Sherlita Amler, Commissioner of Health. “There are no special medications used to treat a person once symptoms appear, but Hepatitis A transmission to others can be prevented through proper handwashing.”

Not everyone infected with Hepatitis A will have all of its symptoms. Symptoms commonly appear within 28 days of exposure, with a range of 15 to 50 days. Preventive treatment is only effective within two weeks of exposure to the virus, but symptoms typically do not appear until a person has had the virus for a few weeks. The illness is rarely fatal and most people recover in a few weeks without any complications.

The country club has fully cooperated with the investigation and voluntarily closed its kitchens today to sanitize them. The restaurant is also voluntarily vaccinating all employees with the Hepatitis A vaccine.

“We value the health and protection of everyone who enjoys Sleepy Hollow”, said Eric Rule, the club’s general manager. “We ask for everyone’s patience while we scrub the club from top to bottom to insure a safe place for our members and their guests to dine. This is a difficult situation, but we have taken steps above and beyond the health department guidelines. All of our staff are being bused this afternoon to the health department to be vaccinated.”

Hepatitis A is transmitted by consuming food or drinks that have been handled by an infected person. It may also be spread from person to person by ingesting something that has been contaminated with the stool of a person with Hepatitis A. Casual contact, such as sitting together, does not spread the virus.

Hepatitis A is reportable to the health department. In 2016, Westchester had six cases of Hepatitis A. Through September 2017, Westchester had five cases. In October, five more cases were reported.

For more health information, like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/wchealthdept, follow us on Twitter @wchealthdept or visit us at www.westchestergov.com/health.

Health Commissioner Sherlita Amler will be available to speak with reporters at 3 p.m. at the county clinic, 134 Court Street, White Plains.

###