



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
**Preble County**

## PREBLE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

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# Immediate Press Release

**Submitted by:** Preble County Public Health 937-472-0087

**Contact Person:** Erik Balster, Health Commissioner

**Date:** February 27, 2019

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## PREBLE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH INVESTIGATING CONFIRMED HEPATITIS A IN LOCAL FOOD SERVICE WORKER

Eaton, Ohio - Preble County Public Health has identified a case of hepatitis A in an employee at the KFC restaurant at 1200 N. Barron Street in Eaton. The employee cannot return to work until cleared by the health department.

The risk to patrons is extremely low. As a precaution, Preble County Public Health is asking anyone who has eaten at the KFC on 1200 N. Barron Street in Eaton from February 9, 2019 through February 20, 2019 to monitor for symptoms of the virus for up to 50 days. Symptoms of hepatitis A include:

- fatigue
- low appetite
- stomach pain
- nausea
- clay-colored stools
- jaundice (yellowish color to the skin and eyes)

A vaccine can protect you from getting sick if received within two weeks of contact with the virus. Patrons should contact their health care provider if they have questions or concerns.

“The restaurant management has been very cooperative and we verified all safe food handling procedures are in place,” said Health Commissioner Erik Balster.

Preble County Public Health is actively providing vaccinations to the workers at KFC

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and none of them are currently ill. As an additional precaution, the restaurant has taken proactive steps, including deep cleaning and sanitizing the location.

Hepatitis A vaccines are also available from healthcare providers and retail pharmacies. Residents are encouraged to call ahead first to make sure a particular location has the vaccine on hand. The vaccine is covered by most insurance plans.

The Ohio Department of Health declared a statewide outbreak of hepatitis A in June of 2018. As of February 25th, 2019, there have been 1,819 cases statewide that are linked to this outbreak.

Preble County Public Health has been investigating cases, conducting outreach and providing vaccinations since a statewide outbreak was declared in 2018. To date, Preble County Public Health has investigated 42 cases of hepatitis A. Public health also has provided vaccination outreach in the community, focusing efforts on at-risk populations.

The disease, which affects the liver, can be spread through eating or drinking contaminated food. Food gets contaminated if a person who has the virus does not wash their hands properly after using the bathroom and before preparing or touching food.

In addition to getting a vaccine, the best way to protect yourself from hepatitis A is to wash your hands thoroughly after using the bathroom and before eating.

Illness from hepatitis A can range from a mild case that lasts a few weeks to a severe illness lasting several months.

People at the highest risk of hepatitis A during this outbreak include:

- People with direct contact with anyone who has the virus
- Men who have sex with men
- People who use illegal drugs
- People who are homeless
- People who have traveled to other areas of the U.S. that are currently experiencing an outbreak

For more information on the statewide outbreak of hepatitis A, visit the Ohio Department of Health's website at [odh.ohio.gov](http://odh.ohio.gov).

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