

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (249) in DH CDB/8/61/1 R Pt.4
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11 March 2026

Dear Doctor,

Cluster of hepatitis A infection involving men who have sex with men

We would like to draw your attention to an upsurge of hepatitis A virus (HAV) infection among men who have sex with men (MSM) in the past few months, and to remind doctors to be vigilant against this disease and advise those patients who belong to high-risk groups (including MSM) to receive hepatitis A vaccination.

Through routine surveillance, epidemiological investigations and genetic analysis, the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health recorded 24 cases of hepatitis A infection where the virus detected harboured an identical genetic sequence, over the past six months (from September 2025 to February 2026), involving 22 males and two females. Epidemiological investigations revealed no overlap in their residences or restaurants patronised by the patients. They aged between 18 and 55. At least 14 of them identified themselves as MSM, accounting for over 60 per cent. The CHP cannot rule out the possibility of an epidemiological link between the infection sources of this cluster and male-male sexual contact.

Hepatitis A virus is primarily transmitted through the ingestion of contaminated food or water, or contaminated hands before eating. The virus can also be transmitted through high-risk sexual contact. The incubation period of hepatitis A is usually 14 to 28 days, though it can last up to 50 days. Due to the long incubation period, symptoms such as fever, malaise, abdominal discomfort, loss of appetite, nausea, diarrhoea and jaundice may not appear until one to two months after infection.



Scientific literatures indicates that, apart from foodborne transmission, hepatitis A outbreaks have occurred among MSM populations in many regions worldwide in the past. Due to the long incubation period, outbreaks transmitted through person-to-person contact tend to persist longer. Between 2015 and 2017, Hong Kong also experienced hepatitis A transmission chains involving MSM, which were successfully interrupted by vaccinating the groups at risk. According to the Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases under the CHP, individuals in high-risk groups (including MSM) should consult their doctors about receiving hepatitis A vaccination to protect their personal health.

In light of the recent cluster among MSM, the CHP will provide MSM with two free doses of hepatitis A vaccine with an aim to control the transmission chain. MSM with Hong Kong resident status who wish to receive hepatitis A vaccine or seek further health information may call the CHP's hotline 2125 2683. The CHP will make assessment and arrange vaccinations for those in need at specified clinics. The hotline operates Monday through Friday from 9am to 5pm, excluding public holidays. Please advise MSM who have not been infected with HAV and have not received the hepatitis A vaccine to receive the vaccination. You can either provide it to them directly or ask them to call our hotline to make an appointment for the free vaccination.

If you encounter cases fulfilling the reporting criteria of viral hepatitis, please be reminded to report the case to the Central Notification Office (CENO) of the CHP by fax (2477 2770), by phone (2477 2772), or via the CENO On-line website (https://cdis.chp.gov.hk/CDIS_CENO_ONLINE/ceno.html). Please also draw the attention of healthcare professionals and supporting staff in your institution/ working with you to the above. Thank you for your unfailing support in the prevention and control of communicable diseases.

Yours faithfully,



(Dr. Albert AU)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health