



NEWS RELEASE

Kern County Department of Public Health

HEPATITIS A EXPOSURE AT CHUY'S MESQUITE BROILER ON ROSEDALE HIGHWAY

Contact Person:

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January 18, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Kern County Department of Public Health has recently been made aware of a case of Hepatitis A in an employee of Chuy's Mesquite Broiler at 8660 Rosedale Highway in Bakersfield. This employee worked and was potentially infectious from Friday, January 4, 2008, through Thursday, January 10, 2008. The employee did not work on Sunday, January 6.

Public Health staff has been conducting investigations as well as working closely with the Department of Environmental Health Services and the California State Department of Public Health. Thanks to the immediate recognition by Chuy's management of the need to restrict the employee from continuing to work pending a health evaluation and clearance, there is low potential that patrons of the Rosedale Highway restaurant may have been exposed on the dates noted above. The Chuy's Mesquite Broiler located at New Stine Road has not been affected by this situation and patrons of this location are not at risk.

There is no risk to persons who have been immunized for Hepatitis A or have had Hepatitis A disease. There is a low potential of infection for persons who are susceptible because they do not have immunity to Hepatitis A. Claudia Jonah, M.D., Interim Health Officer, is advising that prophylaxis recommendations for susceptible patrons who ate at the Rosedale restaurant on the days of potential exposure would be to receive Hepatitis A vaccine if they are healthy and age 1 and older. For those less than age 1, have weakened immune systems or are elderly they should be given immune globulin.

Arrangements have been made with Kern Faculty Medical Group for those who need the Hepatitis A vaccine or IG shot. The medical group can be contacted at (661) 872-7000 and are located at 2201 Mount Vernon Avenue, Suite 211, Bakersfield, California 93306. Chuy's may be contacted at (661) 587-5750. For those who have been previously vaccinated with the Hepatitis A vaccine, there is no cause for concern and no further action is required.

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Telephone (661) 868-0327

1800 Mt. Vernon Avenue

Bakersfield, CA 93306

If you ate at Chuy's on Rosedale Highway on this date...	...you might benefit from post exposure treatment on or before this date.	Kern Faculty Medical Group is available at 2201 Mount Vernon Avenue, Suite 211; (661) 872-7000.
January 4, 2008	January 18, 2008	
January 5, 2008	January 19, 2008	Walk in 8 am to Noon Apointments Noon to 5 pm
January 7, 2008	January 21, 2008	Walk in 8 am to 5 pm
January 8, 2008	January 22, 2008	By Appointment
January 9, 2008	January 23, 2008	By Appointment
January 10, 2008	January 24, 2008	By Appointment

Environmental Health Services staff inspected the restaurant and did not find any problems beyond the infected employee. "The company has been cooperative and prompt in its response to this situation," Dr. Jonah said. "By taking quick action, Chuy's has minimized the number of patrons that may have been exposed to Hepatitis A."

On average, symptoms of hepatitis A occur within 28 days following exposure and may include fever, fatigue, body ache, nausea, abdominal discomfort, dark colored urine and pale stools. Jaundice or yellowing of the skin or whites of the eyes may follow. The illness usually lasts 1-2 weeks, although in rare cases, symptoms can be severe and recovery can take several months. Many people infected with Hepatitis A may have no symptoms or may have mild symptoms without jaundice. For symptom related questions, please contact your medical provider.

Hepatitis A virus is spread by close physical contact and through fecal contamination of liquids or food that does not get cooked and is then consumed. Close contacts, including household and sexual partners, are at risk for acquiring Hepatitis A from an infected person. The incubation period is 2 to 7 weeks. Prompt diagnosis is a benefit in minimizing the spread of infection. Thorough handwashing with soap and warm water after using the toilet and before handling food is the most important factor in preventing the spread of the disease.

For further information about Hepatitis A, call the Kern County Department of Public Health at (661) 868-0510; or visit the Public Health website at <http://www.co.kern.ca.us/health/>.