

HEPATITIS A ALERT FOR RESIDENTS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Dear Physician,

Costco has contacted approximately six hundred BC residents who purchased a berry mix in the United States, to inform them that they may have been exposed to hepatitis A. The berry mix, (sold as *Townsend Farms Organic Antioxidant Blend* by Costco and *Harris Teeter Organic Antioxidant Berry Blend* at Harris Teeter stores) has been linked to a multi state outbreak of hepatitis A. **The product was not sold in Canada, and no cases of hepatitis A have been reported in British Columbians from this exposure.**

The Public Health Agency of Canada has issued a press release about the outbreak:

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/fs-sa/phn-asp/2013/hepa-0610-eng.php>

If your patients consumed this berry mix:

- a) **In the previous 14 days:** they should receive a single dose of hepatitis A vaccine now, unless they have received two doses of hepatitis A vaccine in the past.
- b) **Between 14 and 50 days ago:** they should watch for signs and symptoms of hepatitis A and seek medical care if they become ill. Vaccine is no longer effective at preventing hepatitis A in these individuals.
- c) **More than 50 days ago:** they are no longer at risk of developing hepatitis A from this exposure.

Patients who have bought this berry mix but have not consumed it should discard the product.

Hepatitis A vaccine can be provided free for patients who ate the berry mix in the last 14 days. If you do not have vaccine in your office, your patients can also receive the vaccine from public health by calling 604-983-6700 and asking to speak to a public health nurse. Hepatitis A vaccine is safe in pregnancy and can be provided to children (pediatric dose) six months of age and older.

If you have any questions, please call our office at 604-983-6700 and ask to speak to the Adult Immunization Nurse on call.

Sincerely,



Brian A. O'Connor, MD, MHSc

Medical Health Officer

Vancouver Coastal Health, North Shore