



Cochise Health & Social Services

Mary Gomez, Director

"Building A Healthier Future"

*** MEDIA RELEASE ***

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Hepatitis A Vaccine Available in Response to Potential Infections Associated with Consumption of Frozen Berry Mix Sold at Costco

As of May 31, 2013, approximately 30 human infections of hepatitis A are being investigated by federal, state and local health officials. Seven lab-confirmed cases of hepatitis A have been reported in Arizona, with no cases reported in Cochise County. Onset of illness ranges from late April to late May 2013. The outbreak has been linked to the consumption of Townsend Farms Organic Anti-Oxidant Blend berry mix that was sold at Costco. Costco has removed the product from its stores and is contacting purchasers of the product.

Vaccine can be effective in preventing illness if received within 14 days of consuming the product. Importantly, even without the vaccine, it appears that there is a very low risk of contracting hepatitis A from the berry mix. However, persons who (i) have been contacted by Costco regarding the purchase of the subject berry mix, (ii) have consumed the berry mix in the last 14 days, and (iii) have not previously had a hepatitis A vaccine (or have not previously been diagnosed with hepatitis A) may wish to consider getting a vaccination against hepatitis A.

Cochise Health and Social Services is receiving a supply of hepatitis A vaccine that will be available starting Wednesday, June 5 at the Sierra Vista clinic. For further information on obtaining the vaccine, please call 520 803 3900.

Hepatitis A is a viral illness that attacks the liver. Early signs of hepatitis A appear two to six weeks after exposure. Symptoms commonly include mild fever, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, pain in the upper right side of the abdomen, dark urine and jaundice (yellow eyes or skin). Most people recover within a few weeks or so, but sometimes hepatitis A can lead to hospitalization and severe illness.

It is very important that if you have symptoms like this that you wash your hands after using the bathroom and that you do not go to work if you work in food service, health care or child care.

For further information on hepatitis A visit <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/a/> and for specifics on this outbreak associated with Townsend Farms Organic Antioxidant Blend frozen berry mix, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/Outbreaks/2013/A1b-03-31/index.html>.

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