

January 28, 2016

To: Parents and Guardians of Students at Valhalla Community School

Valhalla Community School Staff

Alberta Health Services has confirmed a number of cases of Hepatitis A in the area, including students at a local school. The source of the infection is unknown at this time. **There have been no cases reported to date at Valhalla Community School.**

Hepatitis A is an infection of the liver caused by a virus. In most cases, the infection goes away on its own and does not lead to long term liver problems. However it can be more serious in some cases. The virus can spread when an infected person does not wash his/her hands properly after going to the bathroom and then touches objects or food; or when a caregiver does not properly wash his or her hands after changing diapers.

Handwashing with soap and water right after using the bathroom or changing a diaper and before food preparation are important in preventing the spread of the virus.

Clinical Symptoms

Not everyone has symptoms. If symptoms develop, they usually appear 2 to 6 weeks after infection and can include: fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, dark urine, pale stools, joint pain and jaundice (yellow skin).

Action and Diagnosis

If you or your child become symptomatic, seek medical attention, and a blood sample will likely be taken to confirm whether you have the virus.

It is important to notify Public Health if an individual develops symptoms. Hepatitis A vaccination may be offered to individuals who are infected or have been exposed to someone with the infection. Please contact one of the following offices:

Beaverlodge Public Health – 780-354-2647

Grande Prairie Public Health – 780-513-7500

Spirit River Public Health – 780-864-3063

More information regarding Hepatitis A can be found at:

<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/health/Pages/conditions.aspx?hwid=hw124783> or by calling Health Link at 811.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the school at 780-356-2370.