



County of Erie

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH

HEALTH ADVISORY # 230

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UPDATES TO HEPATITIS B SCREENING RECOMMENDATIONS

Please distribute to staff in the Departments of Laboratory Medicine, Critical Care, Emergency Medicine, Family Practice, Internal Medicine, Infectious Disease, Infection Control, Pediatrics, Pulmonary Medicine, and all inpatient and outpatient units.

SUMMARY

- On September 19, 2008, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued important updates related to hepatitis B screening recommendations, entitled "Recommendations for Identification and Public Health Management of Persons with Chronic Hepatitis B Virus Infection." MMWR 2008; 57 (No. RR-8): 1-20.

RECOMMENDATIONS PRIOR TO SEPTEMBER 19, 2008

Prior to September 19, 2008, the recommendations for Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) screening have included the following groups:

- Persons born in regions of high HBV endemicity (hepatitis B surface antigen [HBsAg] prevalence of $\geq 8\%$)
- Donors of blood, plasma, organs, tissues, or semen
- Hemodialysis patients
- All pregnant women
- Infants born to hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg)-positive mothers;
- Household, needle-sharing, or sex contacts of persons known to be HBsAg positive
- Persons who are the sources of blood or body fluids for exposures that might require post-exposure prophylaxis (e.g., needlestick, sexual assault)
- HIV-positive persons.

NEW RECOMMENDATIONS

The updated recommendations for HBV screening include the following additional groups:

- Persons born in regions of high and intermediate HBV endemicity (HBsAg prevalence $\geq 2\%$)§†
- U.S.-born persons not vaccinated as infants whose parents were born in regions with high HBV endemicity ($\geq 8\%$ prevalence) regardless of maternal HBV status*†
- Injection-drug users*††
- Men who have sex with men*††
- Persons needing immunosuppressive therapy, including chemotherapy, immunosuppression related to organ transplantation, and immunosuppression for rheumatologic or gastroenterologic disorders*
- Persons with elevated liver function tests (alanine aminotransferase or aspartate aminotransferase) of unknown etiology*

*New recommendation

§Expanded recommendation from 2005

†HBsAg testing is recommended regardless of vaccination history

†† HBsAg testing is recommended regardless of vaccination history if risk behavior began before history of vaccination

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Additional recommendations for contact management, education, counseling, and outreach are also included in the MMWR. The full text of the MMWR publication can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5708a1.htm> .

For further information, contact the Erie County Department of Health at (716) 858-7697, Monday thru Friday, 8:30am to 5:00pm or the New York State Department of Health, Colleen Flanigan, Adult Viral Hepatitis Prevention Coordinator, at (518) 486-6806.

Health Category Definitions:

Health Alert FLASH: conveys the highest level of importance due to a large-scale, catastrophic public health emergency; warrants immediate action or attention

Health Alert Priority: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention to a health problem or situation

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.