

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Ron DeSantis**  
Governor

**Vision:** To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

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January 10, 2019

Dear Parent/Guardian:

There is an alarming increase in cases of hepatitis A in Florida, including in the Tampa Bay region. In 2018, the Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County (DOH-Pinellas) reported 113 cases of hepatitis A in Pinellas County alone. This is significantly higher than Pinellas County's previous five-year average of three reported cases. Hepatitis A is caused by a virus that attacks the liver and causes severe illness which can lead to hospitalization. The virus can contaminate food and water, spread from person to person and live on surfaces for months if not properly disinfected.

DOH-Pinellas wants to ensure that adults and children are protected from hepatitis A. **The most effective way to prevent hepatitis A infection is to get vaccinated.** The hepatitis A vaccine is safe and highly effective and is given in two doses, 6 to 12 months apart. The hepatitis A vaccine is available at most clinics and pharmacies in Pinellas County. For a limited time, DOH-Pinellas is offering the vaccine at no-cost to all residents and visitors at any of the clinic locations.

Additionally, washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after using the restroom, prior to preparing food and prior to eating can also prevent the spread of diseases such as hepatitis A, flu and norovirus (stomach flu).

The symptoms of hepatitis A can include fever, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, fever, jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes), dark urine (orange or brown) and clay-colored stool (gray or white). Most children under 6 years of age do not have symptoms when they have hepatitis A. When symptoms are present, young children typically do not have jaundice, but most older children and adults with hepatitis A have jaundice.

If you or your child develops these symptoms, remain home from school and work and seek medical attention immediately.

Along with this letter is an infographic with that provide information on hepatitis A. For more information on hepatitis A, please visit [www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav](http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav).

If you have any questions or have any concerns about hepatitis A, please contact DOH-Pinellas at 727-824-6932. Thank you for your assistance in preventing the spread of hepatitis A in Pinellas County.

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**Florida Department of Health**  
in Pinellas County

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