

Health Advisory

Acute Hepatitis B Increases in Philadelphia

December 13, 2019

In Philadelphia, there has been a 175% increase in confirmed acute hepatitis B Virus (HBV) infections reported to the Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH). In the past 12 months (ending 10/31/2019), 33 new cases of acute HBV were reported, compared to 12 cases in the previous 12 months (ending 10/31/2018). Of these cases, 52% were female and the median age was 40 years (range: 30-73 years). Of 29 interviewed cases, 72% reported drug use, 61% were experiencing homelessness, and 50% reported sexual risk. There are high rates of other reported drug use (cocaine, methamphetamine, benzodiazepine) with opioid use.

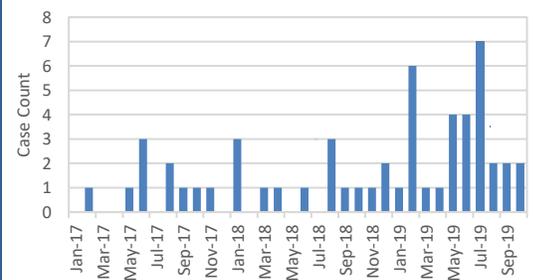
Hepatitis B Virus Infection Prevention and Control:

- Providers should use all opportunities to provide HBV vaccine to all **persons at high risk for exposure to HBV**:
 - Persons who use injection and non-injection drugs
 - Men who have sex with men
 - People experiencing homelessness or unstable housing
 - People who are or were recently incarcerated
 - People having unprotected sex
 - People with hepatitis C virus or HIV infection
 - People who have a household or sexual contact with a known hepatitis B infected person
- Providers should counsel patients on safe sexual health practices, including using condoms during all sexual encounters
- While many patients with acute hepatitis B infection will not experience symptoms, they can still transmit the infection to others. It is critical to diagnose acute infections with serology testing.
- Follow recommended clinical care algorithm among people with increased risk of newly acquired hepatitis B infection below:

SUMMARY POINTS

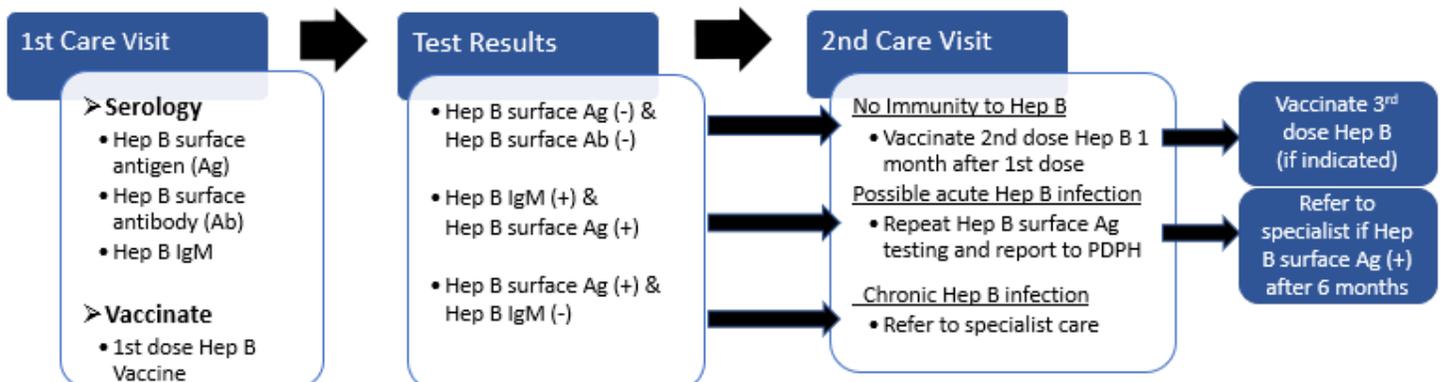
- Acute hepatitis B is increasing in Philadelphia especially among persons who use drugs, and those living homeless
- Take every opportunity to vaccinate high risk persons.
- Consider acute HBV infection among patients presenting with compatible symptoms.
- Promptly report acute cases to PDPH.

Increase in Confirmed Acute Hepatitis B Cases, Philadelphia, January 2017-October 2019



*Additional cases are still under review

Hepatitis B Clinical Care Algorithm among people with increased risk of newly acquired infection



Reporting to PDPH: Prompt recognition of HBV is also important to control transmission. All confirmed and suspected acute hepatitis B cases should be promptly reported to PDPH at 215-685-4509 during regular business hours or 215-686-4514 after-hours.