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Export date: Fri Oct 30 12:09:43 2026 / +0000 GMT

Public Health warns of hepatitis A threat

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health is advising anyone who ate at Marj's Village Kitchen (also referred to as Marj's) in Alma, Ontario between January 2 and January 20 to get a hepatitis A vaccination as soon as possible.

Dr. Nicola Mercer, Medical Officer of Health and CEO for WDG Public Health has confirmed that an employee of the restaurant has a confirmed case of hepatitis A and anyone who ate there in the first part of January could be at risk of infection.

Public Health will be holding free hepatitis A vaccine clinics for anyone who ate food from Marj's Village Kitchen in the first 20 days of the month.

The clinics will be held at the Fergus Public Health offices on Thursday, January 22 from 3 to 7 p.m. and Friday, January 23 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Public Health officials are asking anyone with questions about getting the vaccine or concern they have hepatitis A to call a 1-800-265-7293.

?The risk of exposure is low, but anyone who ate at this restaurant in the first half of January should get a vaccination as a precaution,? said Dr. Mercer. ?Symptoms can develop 15 to 50 days after exposure to the virus and can range from mild to severe. Infants and the elderly can get quite sick. It is important to get your vaccine as soon as possible.?

Hepatitis A is a virus that causes liver infection with symptoms that can last a few weeks to several months. Symptoms include fever, loss of appetite, tiredness, nausea and vomiting, dark urine and yellowing of the skin. The virus is rarely fatal and is not known to cause long-term infection.