**LETTER TO PARENTS AND STAFF MEMBERS**

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| **About letters to parents and staff members:*** Do not send a letter unless the diagnosis has been confirmed by a lab test.
* Notifiable diseases must be reported to DSPublique for validation.
* Do not send a letter without DSPublique’s approval.
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Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

School or daycare: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Subject: Hepatitis A**

Dear parents and staff members,

Cases of hepatitis A have been reported at the school or daycare. Information about hepatitis A is enclosed. To prevent and reduce the spread of the disease, we encourage everyone in daycare, and all family members of children in [daycare or school group (e.g., kindergarten)] to get vaccinated for hepatitis A. You can do so at the following address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

The vaccine is free and should be administered as soon as possible. Some people may already be vaccinated, since the vaccine is part of the regular vaccination schedule and is also recommended for travel to countries where hepatitis A is common, including several Caribbean destinations.

You should see a doctor if you are experiencing jaundice or symptoms of hepatitis A (see the enclosed document). Bring this letter with you to show the doctor. Anyone who has blood tests should stay home until they get the results.

If the hepatitis A diagnosis is confirmed, please let the school or daycare know.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 (block letters)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Tel. no.: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Encl.: Information sheet

**Hepatitis A**

**Information and advice**

**What is hepatitis A?**

Hepatitis A is an infection caused by a virus that attacks the liver.

The disease usually causes fever, aches and pains, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting and abdominal discomfort. It can also cause jaundice (yellow tint to the skin and whites of the eyes), dark urine (the colour of Coca-Cola) and pale stools.

Hepatitis A is often asymptomatic or mild in preschool children. In older children and adults, hepatitis A can be more serious and more often causes jaundice.

**How is it spread?**

The virus is found in the sick person’s stool. It can be spread by ingesting contaminated water, food or drinks, or by handling contaminated objects (e.g., toys). It can also be transmitted through sexual activity with an infected person. People who are asymptomatic for hepatitis A can still transmit the infection.

An infected person is considered contagious for the time virus is present in their stool, i.e., about two weeks before the onset of jaundice or symptoms, and up to one week afterwards (or two weeks afterwards, if they did not have jaundice). They must refrain from preparing food and drinks for others, providing care, and attending daycare.

**How is it detected?**

Hepatitis A is confirmed through a blood test.

**How is it prevented?**

Vaccination (for people 6 months and over) and immunoglobulins (for babies under 6 months) are the most effective ways to avoid developing the disease after contact with the hepatitis A virus.

It can also be prevented through normal hygiene measures:

* By washing hands:
* after using the bathroom;
* after changing a baby’s diaper;
* after helping a child use the bathroom;
* before handling food;
* after handling raw eggs, meat and poultry;
* after touching a pet or its environment;
* before eating.
* By following food safety rules. See the MAPAQ’s [*Guide des bonnes pratiques d'hygiène et de salubrité alimentaires*](https://www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/fr/Publications/Guidemanipulateur5.pdf)*.*
* By frequently cleaning and disinfecting contaminated surfaces, especially changing tables, toilets, bathroom counters and faucets, and toys.
* By not drinking the water while swimming.