

Wisconsin Adult Viral Hepatitis Unit

Statewide Action Planning Group Meeting

Kailynn Mitchell, MPH
Adult Viral Hepatitis Unit Supervisor
kailynn.mitchell@dhs.wisconsin.gov



New HCV Epidemiologist

- Lauren Ostrenga, MPH
 - Joined the Adult Viral Hepatitis Unit at the end of August 2024.
 - She has worked for 7+ years at the Louisiana Department of Health on HIV surveillance and syndemic surveillance work on Viral Hepatitis and STIs.
 - She is originally from southeastern Wisconsin.

Acknowledgments

- Caroline Mohr, MPH
 - Hepatitis C Surveillance Specialist
- Emily Hacker, MPH
 - Hepatitis C Disease Intervention Specialist
- Kelsa Lowe, MPH
 - Hepatitis C Epidemiologist (former)

Hepatitis Reminders



Viral Hepatitis

Low awareness

Testing required

Types of infection

Hepatitis Prevention

Hepatitis A and B vaccines

Hepatitis B and C testing

Hepatitis C treatment

Hepatitis A Virus (HAV)



Hepatitis A Refresher: Transmission

Transmitted through fecal-oral route

Exposure factors

- Close contact (e.g. caring for a sick person, sexual contact, international travel)
- Contact with someone without personal hygiene
- Ingesting contaminated food and water
- Touching objects that are contaminated

Hepatitis A Refresher: Outbreaks

Foodborne – Contaminated Foods

Person-to-person transmission

- Close contact with a person with HAV
- Most recent U.S. outbreaks among people who use drugs, people experiencing homelessness and male-male sexual contact.

Hepatitis A Refresher: Treatment

Vaccine-preventable

No treatment

- Providers may recommend rest, adequate nutrition and fluids
- People with severe symptoms will need medical care at the hospital
- Can cause liver failure or death

Hepatitis A Refresher: Prevention

Practice good hand hygiene

- Use soap and water, not hand sanitizer
- Wash hands:
 - After using the bathroom
 - Before making and eating food
 - After changing diapers
 - After contact with an ill person

Get vaccinated

Hepatitis A: Wisconsin Trends

**218 cases
since 2012
in WI**

**20 HAV
cases
reported in
2023**

**International
travel and
household
exposures**

2023 Wisconsin Hepatitis A Surveillance Annual Review

[Wisconsin Hepatitis A Virus Surveillance Annual Review](#)

Hepatitis A Virus (HAV) is an acute, self-limiting condition affecting the liver, primarily transmitted via direct person-to-person contact or consumption of contaminated food or water. This report provides an epidemiologic evaluation of persons diagnosed with HAV in Wisconsin.

2023 Key Points



20 cases



20% of cases linked to another case



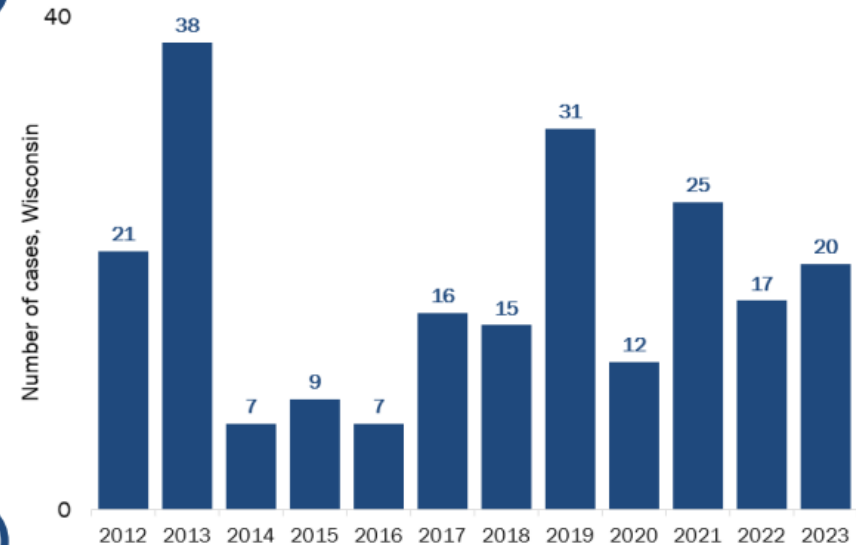
20-39 year olds had the highest incidence



0% of cases vaccinated against hepatitis B



Figure 1. In 2023, 20 hepatitis A cases were reported in Wisconsin. From January 2012 to December 2023, 218 total hepatitis A cases have been reported.



Vaccine Recommendations

Despite being vaccine-preventable, Wisconsin continues to manage and investigate multiple cases of HAV infection annually. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends routine vaccination of children aged 12–23 months, adolescents 2–18 years, adults disproportionately exposed to the virus, or any adult requesting protection against HAV. For additional vaccination recommendations, see: [Prevention of Hepatitis A Virus Infection in the United States: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, 2020 | MMWR \(cdc.gov\)](#)

Hepatitis A – Health Equity Key Takeaways

- Among the reported cases, 40% reported international travel and 10% had household exposure
- In 2023, the majority of HAV cases were among people aged 40 years and older (63%)
- 45% of the 2023 cases were reported in Northeastern Wisconsin

Hepatitis B Virus (HBV)



Hepatitis B Refresher: Transmission

Transmitted through blood, semen, vaginal fluids

Exposure factors

- Sharing injection and non-injection drug use equipment
- Unregulated or DIY tattoos and piercings
- Sharing household items like razors and toothbrushes
- Sexual contact

Hepatitis B Refresher: Treatment

Vaccine-preventable

Cannot be cured, but can be treated:

- Acute infections – supportive treatment
- Anti-viral medications
- Interferon injections

Universal Hepatitis B Screening (2023)

- Screen all adults at least once and pregnant persons during each pregnancy.
- Use the HBV triple panel test.
- Anyone who requests HBV testing should be tested.

Universal Hepatitis B Vaccination (2022)

- Recommends all adults aged 19-59 years should receive HBV vaccines.
- It removes the need for risk factors being disclosed.
- Could increase vaccination coverage and decrease HBV cases.

Source: [Universal Hepatitis B Vaccination in Adults Aged 19–59 Years: Updated Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices — United States, 2022 | MMWR \(cdc.gov\)](#)

Hepatitis B: Wisconsin Trends

**4,632
people
living with
HBV**

**384 newly
reported
cases in
2023**

**Asian
populations
in WI most
impacted**

Hepatitis B – Health Equity Key Takeaways

- 30–39-year-olds had the highest rate of HBV
- 98% of newly reported HBV cases were chronic
- Highest number of reported cases were in Milwaukee, Dane and Waukesha County but the highest rates were in Kewaunee, Monroe and Milwaukee counties

Hepatitis C Virus (HCV)



Hepatitis C Refresher: Transmission

Bloodborne virus

Exposure factors

- Sharing injection and non-injection drug use equipment
- Unregulated or DIY tattoos and piercings
- Sharing household items like razors and toothbrushes
- Sexual contact
- Blood transfusions prior to 1992

Hepatitis C Refresher: Treatment

Direct-acting antiviral medications (DAAs)

Wisconsin Medicaid updates (2019):

- No prior authorization
- No sobriety restrictions
- Treated at all levels of severity
- Re-treatment considered

CDC Universal Hepatitis C Screening Recommendations

- All people aged 18 and older, at least once
- All pregnant people, during every pregnancy
- All people living with HIV, at least once
- Ongoing screening for certain exposure factors

Hepatitis C: Wisconsin Trends

**21,943
people
living with
hepatitis C**

**1,387 HCV
cases
reported
in 2023**

**Native
American
populations
are most
impacted in
WI**

Hepatitis C – Health Equity Key Takeaways

- 58% of all female cases were aged 15-44 (reproductive age)
- Median age of new cases is 35 years
- 44% of all new cases are under 40 years
- Highest number of reported cases were in Milwaukee, Dane and Waukesha County but the highest rates were in Sawyer, Ashland and Florence counties

New 2023 Surveillance Reports

- HAV Surveillance Report (**Published**)
- HBV and HCV Surveillance Report (*In Progress*)
- HBV and HCV Surveillance Report for Milwaukee County (*In Progress*)
- Syndemics Surveillance Report for the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (*In Progress*)
 - HBV, HCV, HIV, and STIs (Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, and Syphilis)

A faded, light blue background image of the Wisconsin State Capitol building, showing its classical architecture with many windows and a central entrance.

Prevention Questions:
DHSDPHHCVprevention@dhs.wisconsin.gov

Surveillance Questions:
DHSDPHHCVsurveillance@dhs.wisconsin.gov

DHS Viral Hepatitis Websites

- [Hepatitis A Virus Infection | Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)
- [Immunizations: Hepatitis B Virus | Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)
- [Wisconsin Hepatitis C Program | Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)

CDC HAV and HBV Vaccine Information Statements

- [Hepatitis A Vaccine Information Statement | CDC](#)
- [Hepatitis B Vaccine Information Statement | CDC](#)

Questions?

Thank you!

Kailynn Mitchell, MPH
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