

Hepatitis A is a highly contagious vaccine-preventable liver infection spread primarily through the fecal-oral route. Since 2017, hepatitis A outbreaks have been identified in 25 states, including states bordering Vermont. These outbreaks are occurring among people who use drugs or people who have experienced homelessness, signaling a shift in hepatitis A epidemiology from outbreaks associated with contaminated food to large community outbreaks with person-to-person transmission.ⁱ

Hepatitis A vaccines are highly effective and very safe. This brief explores the extent to which Vermonters are protected from this infectious disease using data from the Immunization Registry.

Hepatitis A Coverage in Adults

Among adults, the CDC recommends targeted hepatitis vaccination to groups at highest risk (see inset) and anyone seeking vaccination. As the charts below demonstrate, hepatitis A vaccination coverage is low in the adult population. Fewer than 15% of Vermonters between the ages of 19 and 64 years have received a dose of hepatitis A vaccine. An increase in hepatitis A vaccination coverage levels will not only protect individuals but also prevent an outbreak in Vermont. Although two doses are recommended, one dose of hepatitis A vaccine is highly effective in an outbreak.

Groups at Highest Risk for Hepatitis A Infection

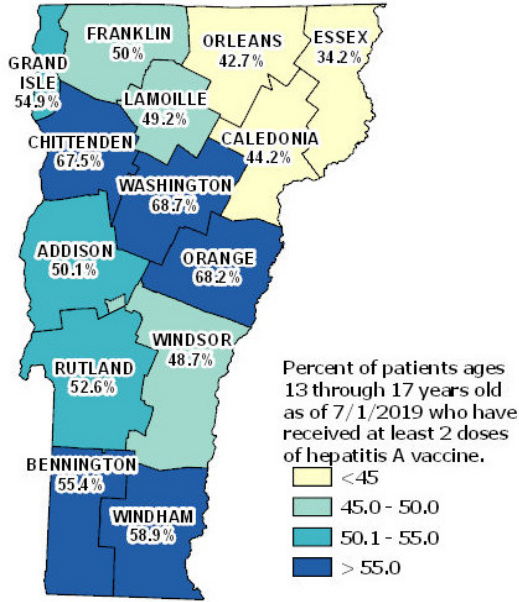
- People who use drugs
- People who are homeless
- Men who have sex with men
- People who are or were recently in prison
- People with chronic liver disease including cirrhosis, hepatitis B or hepatitis C

Hepatitis A Vaccination Coverage Report, Adults

19-64 Years of Age as of 7/1/2019				65+ Years of Age as of 7/1/2019			
County	1+Dose HepA	Population*	Percent 1+ Dose Hep A	County	1+Dose HepA	Population*	Percent 1+ Dose Hep A
Addison	2,762	22,696	12.2%	Addison	420	7,042	6.0%
Bennington	2,281	20,377	11.2%	Bennington	346	7,930	4.4%
Caledonia	2,140	17,738	12.1%	Caledonia	375	6,073	6.2%
Chittenden	21,134	106,225	19.9%	Chittenden	2,383	23,620	10.1%
Essex	262	3,480	7.5%	Essex	32	1,574	2.0%
Franklin	2,445	29,879	8.2%	Franklin	235	7,633	3.1%
Grand Isle	521	4,216	12.4%	Grand Isle	135	1,420	9.5%
Lamoille	1,811	15,527	11.7%	Lamoille	295	4,228	7.0%
Orange	2,729	17,348	15.7%	Orange	365	5,856	6.2%
Orleans	1,187	15,418	7.7%	Orleans	258	5,911	4.4%
Rutland	4,247	35,022	12.1%	Rutland	535	12,644	4.2%
Washington	6,039	35,241	17.1%	Washington	922	11,098	8.3%
Windham	3,663	25,239	14.5%	Windham	561	9,412	6.0%
Windsor	4,879	32,075	15.2%	Windsor	1,107	12,428	8.9%
Total	56,100	380,481	14.7%	Total	7,969	116,869	6.8%

*2017 Census denominator (adjusted)

Hepatitis A Vaccination



Hepatitis A Immunization Coverage in Teens

Most teens 14 years and older were not subject to the current vaccination recommendation and may not have been vaccinated against hepatitis A. In order to increase rates and prevent further outbreaks of hepatitis A, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recently voted to recommend that “all children and adolescents aged 2 through 18 years who have not previously received the hepatitis A vaccine be vaccinated routinely at any age.”

Hepatitis A Vaccination Coverage in Children

Since 2005, a two-dose series of hepatitis A vaccine at least 6 months apart has been recommended for those 12-15 months of age.

24 thru 35 Months of Age as of 7/1/2019			
County	2+ Dose	Population	Percent 2+ dose Hep A
Addison	256	346	73.7%
Bennington	239	345	69.3%
Caledonia	150	310	48.4%
Chittenden	1270	1651	76.3%
Essex	29	60	46.7%
Franklin	449	575	76.9%
Grand Isle	38	51	74.5%
Lamoille	186	276	66.3%
Orange	233	311	71.4%
Orleans	176	278	61.5%
Rutland	313	538	57.8%
Washington	415	587	68.7%
Windham	271	392	67.3%
Windsor	315	503	61.0%
Statewide	4340	6223	68.7%

Data Source: Vermont Immunization Registry

For more information: Bridget Ahrens, bridget.ahrens@vermont.gov, (802)951-4094.

ⁱ Foster MA, Hofmeister MG, Kupronis BA, et al. Increase in Hepatitis A Virus Infections — United States, 2013–2018. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2019;68:413–415. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6818a2>.