

May 11, 2022

Dear Health Care Provider:

**Re: Acute, Severe Hepatitis of Unknown Etiology and Request for Notification of Cases**

Overview:

There have been reports of clusters of children with acute, severe hepatitis of unknown etiology in several European countries (majority of the cases in the United Kingdom) and the United States. The World Health Organization shared that as of April 21, 2022, at least 169 cases had been reported from 12 different countries, of which 17 children required liver transplantation and at least one death had been reported. The children's ages ranged from 1 month to 16 years old and many reported gastrointestinal symptoms prior to presenting with severe acute hepatitis, elevated transaminases greater than 500 IU/L, and jaundice. Many of these children did not have fever. Hepatitis viruses A, B, C, D, and E have not been identified in any of the cases. Adenovirus has been detected in at least 74 cases and the UK and Netherlands have both reported concurrent increasing community circulation of adenovirus. However, the etiology for these clusters of acute hepatitis remains under investigation for both infectious and non-infectious causes and enhanced surveillance is occurring in many of the affected countries. As well, it is not yet clear whether these numbers represent an increase in cases of acute, severe hepatitis of unknown origin compared to similar time periods in previous years.

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) is working with its provincial and territorial partners to investigate reports of potential cases in Canada. Manitoba Health is aware of and is investigating potential cases in the province. This is an evolving situation and we are sending this notification to raise awareness and to ask for reporting of cases. Manitoba Health is recommending that pediatric patients with acute, severe hepatitis **should be referred to Pediatric Gastroenterology and Pediatric Infectious Diseases for assessment and recommendation of appropriate investigations for infectious and non-infectious causes based on their presentation and clinical exposure history.**

Public Health Response:

Manitoba Health is working with the PHAC to conduct enhanced surveillance. **Health care providers involved in any case that meets the PHAC working case definitions should report to Manitoba Health** using the *Clinical Notification of Reportable Diseases and Conditions* [www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/protocol/mhsu\\_0013.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/protocol/mhsu_0013.pdf) under *III Further Reporting (c) Suspected Outbreaks of Illness*. **Completed forms should be faxed to the MHSAL Surveillance Unit at 204-948-3044 (confidential fax).** In addition, a national investigation case report form has been developed and Manitoba Health is working with Pediatric Gastroenterology and Pediatric Infectious Diseases, who will complete this form for all children meeting the case definition.

**PHAC working case definition:**

- **Confirmed:** N/A at present

- **Probable:** A person presenting with an acute hepatitis (**non hepatitis A, B, C, D or E<sup>1</sup>**) with serum transaminase >500 IU/L (AST or ALT), who is 16 years and younger, since 1 October 2021
- **Epi-linked:** A person presenting with an acute hepatitis (**non hepatitis A, B, C, D or E<sup>1</sup>**) of any age who is a close contact<sup>2</sup> of a probable case, since 1 October 2021.

<sup>1</sup>*If hepatitis D-E serology results are pending, but other criteria met, these can be reported and will be classified as “pending classification”. Cases with other explanations for their clinical presentation are excluded.*

<sup>2</sup>*Close contacts are defined as having cared for, lived with, spent significant time within close quarters (e.g. co-worker, daycare) or had direct contact with respiratory secretions and other body fluids (e.g., feces) in the 5 months prior to epi-linked case onset of any symptom reported.*

**NOTE:** as the investigations progress, the above working case definitions will be refined. For the most up to date case definition, please visit Manitoba Health’s Acute Hepatitis of Unknown Origin webpage at [www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/diseases/acute\\_hepatitis.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/diseases/acute_hepatitis.html)

For more information, see: World Health Organization Disease Outbreak News; Multi-Country – Acute, severe, hepatitis of unknown origin in children <https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news/item/2022-DON376>

Sincerely,

*“Original Signed by”*

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