



## Policy Attachment: Communicable Diseases 20.19

### **Subject**                    **Additional Information about Communicable Diseases**

#### **Transmission and Risk Factors**

1. Additional Information about Hepatitis A:

- a) Hepatitis A is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV) and can affect anyone. HAV is found in the feces of people with hepatitis A and is spread by eating food or drinking water that has been contaminated with human waste from an infected person. Good personal hygiene and proper sanitation can help prevent hepatitis A.
- b) Infections with the hepatitis A virus are always acute (except in rare instances) and patients can clear the virus from their bodies within 3-4 months. Some people infected with hepatitis A may not have any symptoms, especially children under 2 years old. In most cases, however, people experience "flu-like" symptoms, including fever, fatigue, weakness, nausea with vomiting, and abdominal pain.

2. Additional Information about Hepatitis B (HBV)

- a) Hepatitis B (HBV) is a serious disease of the liver. Most adults can fight off an infection without treatment. However hepatitis B may develop into a chronic form that, if left untreated, can cause lifelong infection, scarring (cirrhosis) of the liver, liver cancer, liver failure, and death. HBV is found in blood and certain body fluids. It is spread when blood or body fluid from an infected person enters the body of a person who is not immune.
- b) Some people with hepatitis B have no outward signs or symptoms. But others do experience "flu-like" symptoms, such as fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting, fever, weakness, and mild abdominal pain. Less common symptoms are dark urine and yellowing of the eyes and skin (jaundice).
- c) Risk factors for the transmission of Hepatitis B include:
  - ◆ Persons with more than one sex partner in a 6-month period,
  - ◆ Persons diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease,
  - ◆ Men who have sex with men,
  - ◆ Sex partners of infected persons,
  - ◆ Injecting drug users,
  - ◆ Household contacts of chronically infected persons,

- ◆ Infants born to infected mothers,
- ◆ Immigrants and children of immigrants from areas with elevated HBV rates,
- ◆ Healthcare and public safety workers who might be exposed to blood, or
- ◆ Chronic hemodialysis patients.

### 3. Additional Information about Hepatitis C:

- a) Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis C virus (HCV) and is the most serious form of hepatitis. About 85% of all infections develop into chronic infections, and, if left untreated, can cause liver scarring (cirrhosis), liver failure, and liver cancer.
- b) Most people with hepatitis C have no outward signs or symptoms. But others do experience “flu-like” symptoms such as fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting, fever, weakness, and mild abdominal pain. Less common symptoms are dark urine and yellowing of the eyes and skin (jaundice).
- c) People at risk for the transmission of Hepatitis C include:
  - ◆ Injecting drug users,
  - ◆ Recipients of clotting factors made before 1987,
  - ◆ Hemodialysis patients,
  - ◆ Recipients of blood and/or solid organs before 1992,
  - ◆ Infants born to HCV infected mothers,
  - ◆ People with undiagnosed liver problems, or
  - ◆ Healthcare and public safety workers who might be exposed to blood.
  - ◆ Although HCV is not commonly spread through sex, persons having sex with multiple partners or with an infected steady partner may be at increased risk.

### 4. Additional Information about tuberculosis (TB)

Signs and symptoms of tuberculosis depend on where in the body the TB bacteria are growing. TB bacteria usually grow in the lungs and may cause a bad cough that lasts longer than two weeks, pain in the chest, and coughing up blood or sputum. Other symptoms of TB disease include weakness or fatigue, weight loss, no appetite, chills, fever, and sweating at night.

### 5. Additional Information about tuberculosis Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus Aureus* (MSRA)

- a) *Staphylococcus aureus*, often referred to simply as “staph,” are bacteria commonly carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people without causing illness. Occasionally, staph can cause an infection; staph bacteria are one of the most common causes of skin infections in the United States. Most of these infections are minor such as pimples and boils and most can be treated without antibiotics. However, staph bacteria can also cause serious infections such as pneumonia, surgical wound or blood infections. In the past, most serious staph bacteria infections were treated with a

certain type of antibiotic related to penicillin. Over the past 50 years, treatment of these infections has become more difficult because staph bacteria have become resistant to various antibiotics, including the commonly used penicillin-related antibiotics. These resistant bacteria are called methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, or MRSA.

- b) MRSA infection usually develops in patients in hospitals or other healthcare settings. These patients generally are very sick, have weakened immune systems or have an open wound. MRSA causes illness in persons outside of hospitals and health care settings as well. Cases of MRSA diseases in the community have been associated with recent antibiotic use, sharing contaminated items, having active skin diseases, and living in crowded or congregate care settings.
- c) Staph bacteria can spread among people having close contact with infected people. MRSA almost always spreads by direct physical contact, and not through the air. Spread may occur through indirect contact by touching objects (i.e. towels, sheets, wound dressings, clothes, workout areas, sports equipment etc. contaminated by the infected skin of a person with MRSA or staph bacteria.
- d) The following are some prevention strategies to reduce the spread of MRSA:
  - ◆ Keep hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
  - ◆ Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
  - ◆ Avoid contact with other people's wounds or material contaminated from wounds.
  - ◆ Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors.