

Hepatitis A outbreak linked to frozen berries sold at Costco

Local health department advised consumers to check their freezers

YOUR TOWN---An outbreak of hepatitis A is linked to “Townsend Farms Organic Anti-Oxidant Blend” frozen berries sold in Costco stores. In [YOUR COUNTY] there have been XX confirmed cases of hepatitis A related to these berries. County health officials advise:

- Do not eat “Townsend Farms Organic Anti-Oxidant Blend” berries.
- If you have any of these berries in your freezer, discard them now or return them to Costco for a refund.
- Contact your health provider if you’ve eaten these berries and become ill with mild fever, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, pain in the upper right side of the abdomen, dark urine and jaundice (yellow eyes or skin). It is very important if you have these symptoms that you do not go to work, especially if you work in food service, health care or child care.
- If you’ve eaten these berries within the last two weeks, you may prevent infection with either a hepatitis A vaccine or immune globulin. If you’ve already received a hepatitis A vaccination in the past, you do not need to be reimmunized. Fortunately, most school-aged children in Oregon have already been vaccinated for hepatitis A.

The disease varies in severity, with mild cases lasting two weeks or less and more severe cases lasting four to six weeks or longer. Hepatitis A infection can be severe and can result in hospitalization. Some individuals, especially children, may not develop jaundice and may have an illness so mild it can go unnoticed. However, even mildly ill people can be highly infectious. People with symptoms suggestive of hepatitis should consult a physician immediately, even if symptoms are mild.

Hepatitis A virus is spread from person to person through close contact or through food handling. The virus is commonly spread by contaminated food or beverages. People are at increased risk of acquiring hepatitis A when they have been in close contact with an infected person.

Townsend Farms has voluntarily recalled certain lots of their Organic Antioxidant Blend (3 lb. bag) as well as lots sold under the name “Harris Teeter Organic Antioxidant Berry Blend (10 oz. bag).

For more information, visit www.healthoregon.org/news or call your health care provider.