



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
Office of Communications**



241 N. Figueroa Street, Room 348 • Los Angeles, CA 90012
Tel: (213) 240-8144 • Fax: (213) 481-1406
www.ladhs.org

For Immediate Release
June 22, 2004

For more information contact:
Maria Iacobo or Luci Kwak (213) 240-8144

HEALTH ADVISORY: HEPATITIS A

LOS ANGELES – The Los Angeles County Department of Health Services was alerted that two employees at the Olive Garden restaurant, located at 1741 N. Victory Place, Burbank, were diagnosed with Hepatitis A in mid-June. An investigation has revealed that these employees did not prepare food and the department has determined that the risk to restaurant patrons is extremely low. This health advisory is for information purposes only and does not require action on the part of the public.

The health department is continuing its investigation of these cases but does not have any evidence that these two workers contracted their illnesses at the restaurant.

“In addition, because our initial investigations indicate that these two workers had minimal direct contact with food, as well as other factors (e.g., type of food served, food handling and hygiene practices at the restaurant, and symptoms of ill employees), we believe these cases presented very little risk to patrons who may have eaten at the restaurant,” said Jonathan Fielding, M.D., M.P.H., Director of Public Health and Health Officer.

The two Olive Garden employees have not worked at that restaurant since June 15th.

“The Olive Garden is fully cooperating with the health department in this investigation. Public health teams have carefully inspected the restaurant and found that its food safety practices meet high standards. There is no reason to avoid eating at this facility,” said Dr. Fielding.

“The purpose of this health advisory is to inform the public of these cases, and advise them that based on our initial assessment the risk to the public is very low,” said Laurene Mascola, M.D., M.P.H., Chief of the Acute Communicable Disease Control program. “The risk of transmission from this source is considered very slight and we have not received notice of any other cases associated with these two employees or resulting from exposure at this establishment.”

Facts About Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is usually spread from person to person via a fecal-oral route. Thorough handwashing with soap and hot water after using the toilet and before handling food is the most important factor in preventing the spread of the disease. The incubation period for Hepatitis A is two to six weeks. Symptoms are: jaundice (a yellow color to the eyes or skin), nausea, loss of appetite, vomiting, fever, abdominal cramps, dark-colored urine, fatigue and light-colored bowel movements.

For general questions about Hepatitis A the public can call the county health department’s Health Information Line at: 800/427-8700.

Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control and community and family health and comprises more than 3,800 employees with an annual budget exceeding \$600 million.

###

For more information regarding Hepatitis A: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/a/index.htm>