



Facsimile Cover Sheet
Wharangī Nama Waea

Date/Te Ra: **14 March 2014**

To/Kia: General Practitioners, Practice Nurses, Pharmacists, After-hours Centers and Emergency Departments in the greater Wellington and Wairarapa region	From/Na:
Name of Agency/Wahi Mahi:	Fax Number/Nama Waea:

Public Health Alert

Potential contamination of fruit with Hepatitis A

I would be grateful if you could distribute the following information from the Ministry of Health to relevant staff in your organisation.

If you would also like to receive this by email for ease of distribution, storage and retrieval please advise RPH of your email on rph@huttvalleydhb.org.nz.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Nesdale'.

Dr Annette Nesdale

Medical Officer of Health

Regional Public Health

Public Health Alert



Date: 14 March 2014

To: General Practitioners, Practice Nurses, Pharmacists, After-hours Centres,
Emergency Departments in the greater Wellington and Wairarapa region

From: Dr Annette Nesdale

Potential contamination of fruit with Hepatitis A

On 12 March the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) informed the Ministry of Health of a case of Hepatitis A in a fruit packer in the Hawke's Bay. The ill person handled fruit while infectious over a four day period from 25 - 28 February 2014

MPI has advised that potentially contaminated fruit includes Royal Gala and New Zealand Beauty apples and Golden Queen peaches. Fruit was on sale between 27 February and 13 March 2014 at the following outlets:

Royal Gala apples from: all Countdown, Fresh Choice and Super Value supermarkets in the North Island

Golden Queen peaches from: all Countdown, Fresh Choice and Super Value supermarkets in the North Island, and PAK'nSAVE, New World and Four Square supermarkets from Kaitaia to Taupo

New Zealand Beauty apples from: all Countdown, Fresh Choice and Super Value supermarkets in the South Island

A small amount of fruit was sent to eight smaller independent fruiterers in Christchurch and Auckland who have yet to be positively identified. MPI will confirm the names of these outlets as soon as possible.

- They consider the risk of infection to consumers of these products is very low.
- A trade recall was initiated by the distributor as of 12 March. However, much of the potentially affected product will already have been purchased and consumed.

Potentially contaminated fruit is safe to eat if it is cooked well, although if in doubt, it should be thrown out. The Ministry recommends standard hand and food hygiene practices when preparing and consuming all food. Further information on Hepatitis A can be found below.

Information on Hepatitis A for health professionals

Signs and symptoms of Hepatitis A can include fever, malaise, anorexia, nausea or abdominal discomfort, jaundice, and an enlarged tender liver. Children are often asymptomatic and occasionally present with atypical symptoms, including diarrhoea, cough, coryza or arthralgia. Jaundice is very unusual in children younger than 4 years, and occurs in only 10 percent of cases in the 4–6 year age group.

The incubation period for Hepatitis A ranges from 15-50 days. People are most infectious during the 1-2 weeks before and the first few days after the onset of jaundice.

Transmission is mainly person to person by the faecal-oral route.

Suspected cases of Hepatitis A should be notified to the on-call Medical Officer of Health, on 04- 570 9002 (for the greater Wellington and Wairarapa regions) notification should not await laboratory confirmation.

Laboratory confirmation should be attempted. Laboratory confirmation requires positive Hepatitis A-specific IgM in serum (in the absence of recent vaccination) and raised liver function tests.

Note that post-exposure vaccination is usually only recommended for household and other close contacts of confirmed cases and should be given within 14 days of last exposure.

For more information on Hepatitis A immunisation;

- Please call the Immunisation Advisory Centre free on 0800 IMMUNE (0800 466 863) or visit their website: www.immune.org.nz