

Australian Capital Territory

Public Health Alert 2011 (No 1)

Notifiable instrument NI2011-188

made under the

Public Health Act 1997 – Section 118A (Public Health Alerts)

1 Name of Instrument

This instrument is a Public Health Alert; *Public Health Alert 2011 (No 1)*.

2 Commencement

This instrument commences immediately upon notification.

3 Public Health Alert

A Public Health Alert is issued for people who have eaten at the Aladdin Indian Restaurant in Manuka between 3 and 21 March 2011 to be alert for symptoms of Hepatitis E.

A food handler who worked at the restaurant while unknowingly infectious was diagnosed with Hepatitis E late last week. While the risk of transmission is estimated to be very low, people who ate at the restaurant between 3 and 21 March are advised to seek prompt medical attention if they develop symptoms of Hepatitis.

Symptoms usually develop 15 to 60 days after exposure to the virus and therefore it is possible that patrons may develop symptoms from late March until late May 2011.

Typical signs and symptoms of Hepatitis include yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice), dark urine, loss of appetite, abdominal pain and tenderness, nausea and vomiting, and fever.

Hepatitis E infection is uncommon in Australia. It is generally seen in returned travellers who have contracted the virus through ingestion of contaminated food and water.

Hepatitis is a virus that causes inflammation of the liver and the Hepatitis E infection usually causes mild disease and normally resolves on its own without treatment. The disease however, can be more serious for those with existing liver disease, those who are immune-compromised and those who are pregnant, especially those in the last trimester.

There is no vaccine or other forms of prevention for Hepatitis E.

The public is advised that the food handler ceased working as soon as symptoms appeared and there is no current risk of infection from the restaurant. It is also important to note that the restaurant management and staff have been extremely cooperative in this investigation.

For more information on Hepatitis E please visit the ACT Health website; www.health.act.gov.au/factsheets or call the Health Protection Service Communicable Disease Information line on 6205 2155 during business hours.

Dr Paul Kelly
Acting Chief Health Officer

5 April 2011