

Universal Hepatitis A Vaccination to Sustain Progress Toward Elimination

In the Lancet, Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination director John Ward calls for maintaining routine universal childhood hepatitis A vaccination.

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Decatur, GA — In a [Viewpoint published today \[April 23\] in The Lancet](#), Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination director Dr. John W. Ward and Dr. Noele Nelson urge U.S. policymakers to maintain routine universal childhood vaccination against hepatitis A.

The Viewpoint authors, both architects of previous Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for hepatitis A vaccination, present a point by point rebuttal to the January 5, 2026 decision of the acting CDC director to no longer recommend hepatitis A vaccination for all children in the United States. They illustrate how the decision to remove hepatitis A vaccination from the routine childhood immunization schedule threatens decades of success in controlling the virus.

“Three decades of hepatitis A vaccination in the USA have firmly established the effectiveness, long-term immunity, and safety of the hepatitis A vaccine,” said Ward. “Routine hepatitis A vaccination of all children is the proven strategy to prevent hepatitis A. With universal hepatitis A vaccination, we, as a nation, can eliminate hepatitis A.”

Since 1996, routine hepatitis A vaccination of children has led to a 95% decline in hepatitis A. By 2011, the incidence of hepatitis A reached a record low of 0.4 cases per 100,000 population. Pediatric vaccination is essential because it eliminates a reservoir of transmission in communities including adults, who are at the highest risk for severe liver disease and liver failure.

There is ample evidence to support vaccine safety and effectiveness cited in the Viewpoint:

- Pre-licensure studies were randomized, placebo-controlled trials that identified no serious adverse events.
- Post-licensure surveillance of hundreds of millions of doses worldwide confirms an excellent safety profile.

- Nations such as Israel, Brazil, and the Republic of Korea continue to recommend routine childhood vaccination against hepatitis A.

The Viewpoint warns that ending the recommendation will likely lower coverage and increase the risk of outbreaks of hepatitis A. Large person-to-person outbreaks between 2016 and 2023 resulted in approximately 45,000 cases and 424 deaths, demonstrating the virus's impact on unvaccinated populations.

"The low incidence of hepatitis A in the United States is a direct result of the success of the hepatitis A vaccination program," the authors conclude. Upholding these policies is necessary to protect all communities from this preventable disease.

About the Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination

The [Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination](#), a program of [The Task Force for Global Health](#), is a nonprofit bringing together global partners to achieve worldwide elimination of viral hepatitis. The Coalition supports local capacity by expanding the necessary knowledge base, providing technical assistance, and mobilizing commitment to achieve elimination goals.

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