



Copies of any bulletin may be ordered by calling the Section of Epidemiology at (907) 269-8000
or by writing to us at PO Box 240249, Anchorage, Alaska 99524-0249

Bulletin No. 5
April 23, 1976

Vitamin B 15

“Vitamin B 15” is currently being promoted as safe and effective for use in the treatment of a variety of diseases. There is no vitamin recognized as Vitamin B 15. Neither this so-called vitamin, nor any of its ingredients have been shown to be effective or safe in the treatment of any disease. The representation that Vitamin B 15 has an established role in nutrition is false and misleading.

(Reported by Heinz G. Wilms, Federal Food and Drug Administration)

Hepatitis a in Bethel Area and Update

Since January, 1976, an increased incidence of cases of Hepatitis A has been noted at the Bethel Public Health Service Hospital. Between January 1, 1976 and April 20, 1976, 180 cases of Hepatitis A have been discovered in Bethel and the surrounding villages. Epidemiologic investigation has revealed the following: An increased incidence of cases of Hepatitis A was noted as early as October, 1975. Cases have continued to occur in the Bethel area since October and there is little evidence that disruption of the Bethel sewage system has played a role in the epidemic to date. The epidemic seems to have spread from person-to-person contact. Cases are occurring in many outlying villages as well as Bethel. There is a large increase in the number of cases of Hepatitis A in the period January through April, 1976, compared with past years. Examination of age distribution indicates that most cases are occurring in children between the ages of 6 and 12. However, approximately 15% of all cases are occurring in adults between 15 and 60 years old. The epidemic is continuing.

Recommendations for the use of Gamma Globulin are: 1. It must be emphasized that the most important measures to protect against hepatitis are good personal hygiene and proper disposal of human waste. Individuals can protect themselves. 2. Gamma Globulin will provide protection against Hepatitis A when administered before exposure or during the incubation period of the disease. Immune serum globulin is recommended for all household contacts who have not already had Hepatitis A. Casual contacts (e.g., people who occasionally eat meals in the house of a person with hepatitis) even though related, are **not** candidates for Gamma Globulin. 3. There is no reason to administer Gamma Globulin to pupil or teacher contact of a patient. 4. People at unusually high risk should have prophylactic Gamma Globulin. These should include workers who are involved in the disposal of “honey bucket” waste and certain groups of hospital workers. Hospital laboratory personnel who are continually exposed to blood, urine, and stool should receive Gamma Globulin prophylaxis. Other hospital workers may be at increased risk of acquiring Hepatitis A and Gamma Globulin should be available to those who request it. 5. Adults who are not from the Bethel area and who have never had Hepatitis A may want to consider obtaining Gamma Globulin as prophylaxis before traveling to the Bethel area. We do not recommend that all people traveling to the Bethel area receive Gamma Globulin prophylaxis. The decision to administer Gamma Globulin as prophylaxis should be made based upon risk of exposure. Consult your physician or State Health Department if you are in doubt.

It is crucial for all health workers to keep excellent records of new cases of hepatitis and of people who receive Gamma Globulin. This is the best way, and the only way we have to evaluate the extent and seriousness of the hepatitis outbreak and the effectiveness of Gamma Globulin. The Field Health Office, c/o Dr. Quentin Fisher, Bethel P.H.S. Hospital, should be notified of **every** case of hepatitis in the Bethel area. The better the reporting, the better we will be able to predict how long the epidemic will last.