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State issues hepatitis alert

By Kim Murakawa
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Patrons of two Waikiki hotel restaurants earlier this month should get immunization shots against hepatitis A, the state Department of Health warned last night.

The department issued the advisory after it said two employees at the Halekulani Hotel's Orchids restaurant and the Hilton Hawaiian Village's Vil-

lage Steak and Seafood Restaurant were diagnosed as having the nonfatal virus.

The two cases have been linked to food prepared for an Oct. 4 reception at the governor's mansion that sickened at least 27 people, the department said.

A food worker at Orchids and a beverage worker at the Village Steak and Seafood Restaurant recently tested positive after showing symptoms of hepatis

A, said Health Department spokesman Patrick Johnston.

The advisory was based on when the two employees worked and what duties they performed.

Patrons at risk for catching hepatitis A are:

- People who ate fruit garnish on breakfast plates at the Orchid Restaurant at the Halekulani Hotel from 6:30 a.m. to noon Nov. 1 to 8.

- People who drank beverages

from the bar at the Village Steak and Seafood Lounge at the Hilton Hawaiian Village from 6 to 9:30 p.m. Nov. 1 to 7.

Those at risk should immediately tell their doctors, so they can receive injections of immune globulin, also called gamma globulin, if their exposure occurred within the past 14 days. The shot provides temporary protection against infection.

The department will answer

questions about the immunization this weekend at 586-4586.

Tests for most of the 120 food servers at the reception came back negative, and the state is now investigating the food as a source for the outbreak, Johnston said.

Symptoms for hepatitis A include mild fever, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, abdominal pain, dark urine and jaundice.