

# Water Supply Causes Mass Hepatitis A Infection in Russia

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Water supply companies in Russia's republic of Dagestan are facing a criminal investigation after 69 people became infected with Hepatitis A from drinking water.

An online statement posted Thursday by Russia's health watchdog Rospotrebnadzor said that cases were recorded in three different places in the North Caucasus republic: the towns of Derbent and Dagestanskiye Ogni and the village of Gedzhukh. Fifty-eight of those infected were children.

The victims all complained of feeling generally ill and noticing a yellow tint to the skin, the RGVK Dagestan television channel reported. Other symptoms of Hepatitis A — an infectious disease of the liver — include acute stomach pain, vomiting and fever.

All of those infected have been hospitalized, but none are in serious condition, the statement said.

Laboratory testing indicated that the local water supply was to blame for the outbreak,

according to the statement, noting that all the victims received their drinking water from the same water main.

Rospotrebnadzor said it had sent notifications of administrative violations to two local water supply companies, Vodkan and Chistaya Voda. The watchdog has also sent materials to the regional branch of the Investigative Committee to decide whether or not to file charges against the companies for violating sanitary rules.

Hepatitis A is often spread by drinking water or food contaminated with infected feces, according to the World Health Organization. There are an estimated 1.5 million infections across the globe each year.

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