



From Community Alert to Public Health Action:

A CBS Response to the Hepatitis A Outbreak in Kamed El Loz, Bekaa

Kamed El Loz, Bekaa – Lebanon

120+
Hepatitis A
Cases Investigated

Response initiated within 48 hours



Joint field assessment and coordination with municipality and health authorities



Case investigation, screening, and sample collection activities



Door-to-door awareness and outreach to vulnerable communities and ITSs

THE STORY

On **17 May 2024**, the municipality of Kamed El Loz reported an unusual increase in Hepatitis A cases to the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and requested support from the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC). What initially appeared to be a cluster of more than 24 cases presenting with vomiting and jaundice quickly grew into a larger public health concern, with the cumulative number of cases exceeding **120**.

Within **48 hours**, LRC supported the MoPH and conducted field assessments, case investigations, and the collection of human and water samples. Working closely with the municipality and the MoPH Epidemiological Surveillance Unit (ESU), the teams carried out community visits and household assessments to better understand the situation and identify potential sources of transmission.

Laboratory testing confirmed contamination of the local water supply. Further investigation revealed that a **broken sewage pipe** had contaminated a community well used for drinking and household purposes.

A rapid multi-sectoral response was immediately launched. LRC Disaster Management (DM) and WASH teams, together with the municipality, MoPH, and other partners, coordinated efforts to repair the damaged sewage pipe, chlorinate the water supply, and reduce the risk of further exposure.

Over six days, more than **30 volunteers** and around **12 nurses** were mobilized to support screening, investigation, awareness activities, and community outreach. During the field assessments, teams also identified several Informal Tented Settlements (ITSs) within the municipality that required additional support. These settlements were subsequently included in the response through sampling, testing, routine immunization activities, health education sessions, and the distribution of Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS) to affected and at-risk households.

In parallel, LRC supported MoPH routine immunization activities, reaching **more than 300 children** and helping protect communities from other vaccine-preventable diseases.

This response demonstrated the value of community reporting, rapid investigation, and strong coordination between local authorities, health partners, and communities. What started as a local alert became a coordinated public health action that identified the source of the outbreak, addressed the underlying risk, and helped protect hundreds of families from further exposure.

“ The rapid collaboration between the municipality, MoPH, and the Lebanese Red Cross helped identify the source of the outbreak and protect our community.

– Municipality Representative, Kamed El Loz



OUR RESPONSE TIMELINE



17 May 2024
Community alert raised
Municipality reported increase in Hepatitis A cases to MoPH.



Within 48 hours
Field assessment & investigation
Teams conducted assessments, collected samples, and investigated cases.



Source identified
Broken sewage pipe contaminated the community well.



Coordinated response
Water chlorinated, pipe repaired, and risk of further exposure reduced.



Community outreach
Door-to-door awareness, screening, and risk communication for 6 days in Kamed El Loz and ITSs.



Children protected
300 children reached through routine immunization activities in coordination with MoPH.



One community alert led to rapid action, protecting hundreds of families from further exposure.