

Hepatitis A

1. What is hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a highly contagious (spreads person-to-person) liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus (germ). Mild cases can last a few weeks while severe cases can last several months.

2. How is hepatitis A spread?

Hepatitis A spreads by putting something in your mouth (object, food, or drink) that has been in contact with the feces (poop) of an infected person. Hepatitis A can be spread by:

- Forgetting to wash your hands after using the bathroom or changing diapers
- Having sexual contact with infected partner(s)
- Consuming food or drinks that are contaminated by the virus

3. Who is at risk for hepatitis A?

Anyone can get hepatitis A, but you are at higher risk if you:

- Travel or live in countries where hepatitis A is common
- Live with someone who has hepatitis A
- Have a clotting-factor disease like hemophilia
- Use recreational drugs
- Are men who have sex with men
- Have sexual contact with someone who has hepatitis A

4. What are the symptoms of hepatitis A?

Not everyone shows symptoms. If symptoms develop, they usually appear 2 to 6 weeks after infection. Symptoms can include:

- Fever
- Vomiting
- Grey stool
- Feeling tired
- Stomach pain
- Joint pain
- Loss of appetite
- Dark urine
- Yellowing of the skin and eyes
- Nausea
- (pee)

5. How is hepatitis A treated?

Treatment includes rest, good nutrition, fluids, and medical monitoring. Some people may need to be hospitalized. Most people who get hepatitis A recover completely and don't have lasting liver damage. It's important to see a doctor if you have symptoms of hepatitis A.

6. How can hepatitis A be prevented?

The best way to prevent hepatitis A is by getting vaccinated. The hepatitis A vaccine is given as 2 shots, 6 months apart. The vaccine is safe and effective. Visit your doctor's office, or call 2-1-1 to find a local clinic or doctor. You can also prevent the spread of hepatitis A by washing hands with soap and warm water:

- Before eating or preparing food
- After using the bathroom or changing diapers



Who should get vaccinated?

- All children at age 1-year
- Travelers to countries where hepatitis A is common
- Family and caregivers of adoptees from countries where hepatitis A is common
- Men who have sex with men
- Recreational drug users
- People with chronic liver disease or hepatitis B or C
- People with clotting-factor disorders

For more information:

Los Angeles County,
Department of Public Health
<http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/Diseases/HepA.htm>

California Department of
Public Health
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/OVHP.aspx>

Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
<https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav/index.htm>