

Hepatitis means swelling of the liver. Hepatitis can be caused by chemicals, drugs, alcohol and viruses. The only kind of hepatitis that can be spread to other people is caused by a virus. Hepatitis A is a common disease caused by the hepatitis A virus.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of hepatitis A may include:

- Fever
- Tiredness
- Loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting or stomach ache
- Yellow skin and eyes (jaundice)
- Dark urine
- Light or grey colored stool (poop)

Symptoms start 15 to 50 days after being infected. A person with hepatitis A can spread the illness from 2 weeks before feeling sick to 1 week after the symptoms begin.

Young children often do not have any symptoms. Most others who get hepatitis A feel sick for a few weeks to 6 months. Older people are more likely to get really sick. Few people die from hepatitis A.

TREATMENT

There is no medicine to treat hepatitis A. Most people with hepatitis A get better without treatment. If you have hepatitis A, you can help yourself get better by resting, eating healthy foods, not drinking alcohol or taking drugs. Talk to your doctor about the medicines you take.

HOW IT SPREADS

Hepatitis A spreads when a person:

- With hepatitis A does not wash his hands well after using the bathroom and then touches food or things that other people put in their mouths.
- Cares for someone with hepatitis A and doesn't wash his hands well after changing diapers or cleaning up after an infected person.
- Touches the anus of someone with hepatitis A during sex (for example, men who have sex with men)
- Eats raw or undercooked seafood from water that has hepatitis A in it.

HOW TO PREVENT HEPATITIS A – READ THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS PAGE

Vaccination

The best way to prevent hepatitis A is to get vaccinated. There are two vaccines that protect against hepatitis A—the hepatitis A vaccine and the combination vaccine that protects against both hepatitis A and hepatitis B. You need two doses of hepatitis A vaccine given at least 6 months apart to protect against hepatitis A. You need three doses of the combination vaccine (0, 1 and 6 months) to protect against hepatitis A and B.

People who should get vaccinated against hepatitis A include:

- All children at 1 year of age
- Travelers to countries where hepatitis A is common
- People who use illegal drugs
- Men who have sex with men
- People with long-term liver disease
- People with blood clotting-factor disorders
- Family and caregivers of children adopted from countries where hepatitis A is common

Hepatitis A Immune Globulin (IG) also protects people from hepatitis A. IG is used when people have been exposed to hepatitis A in an outbreak or who do not have time to be fully immunized against hepatitis A before traveling to places where hepatitis A is common.

International Travelers

Travelers visiting areas of the world where hepatitis A is common can get hepatitis A even if they are careful about what they eat and drink. The risk of getting hepatitis A is higher for travelers to rural areas and for travelers who eat and drink in areas with poor sanitation.

Boiling or cooking food and drinks for 1 minute kills the hepatitis A virus. It is best to eat cooked foods when traveling. It is still possible to get hepatitis A from food if people serving the food have hepatitis A and touch the food after it has been cooked.

Handwashing

When caring for someone with diarrhea or vomiting you should wash your hands well, especially before making food, after changing diapers, helping a sick person use the bathroom, touching soiled laundry or cleaning soiled areas. If you work in child care or in a restaurant, wash your hands well and often.

How to Wash



1. Wet



2. Soap



3. Scrub 15 –20 seconds



4. Rinse



5. Dry



6. Use towel to turn off faucet

WHEN TO WASH

- Before and after eating
- Before, during and after making and touching food
- After using the bathroom or helping a child use the bathroom
- After changing or checking a diaper
- After coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose and after wiping a child's nose
- After touching blood or body fluids (urine, feces, vomit)
- After touching animals or their waste
- After touching trash
- After touching money
- Whenever hands look, feel or smell dirty