

## Hepatitis A Vaccine

- ◆ All children should receive the Hepatitis A vaccine between 12 and 23 months of age. People who are more likely to be infected and people with chronic liver disease should also receive the vaccine.
- ◆ Doctors give the Hepatitis A vaccine in two shots. You should get the second shot 6 to 12 months after the first shot.



## Treatment

- ◆ Treatment includes resting, drinking plenty of liquids, and eating healthy foods to help relieve symptoms. Your doctor may also suggest medicines to help relieve symptoms.
- ◆ Talk with your doctor before taking any prescription or over-the-counter medicines, vitamins or other dietary supplements, or complementary or alternative medicines; any of these could damage your liver.
- ◆ You should avoid alcohol until your doctor tells you that you have completely recovered from Hepatitis A.

If you have symptoms for longer than 6 months, see your doctor.

Adapted from: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disease

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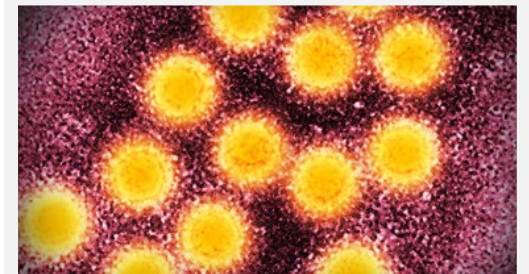
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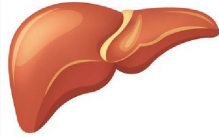
# Hepatitis A: What You Need to Know



## What is Hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a viral infection that causes liver inflammation (swelling) and damage. Swelling can damage organs.

The liver is a vital organ that processes nutrients, filters the blood, and fights infections. When the liver is inflamed or damaged, its function can be affected.



Hepatitis A is a short-term infection, which means people usually get better without treatment after a few weeks.

## Symptoms

- ◆ Dark yellow urine
- ◆ Feeling tired
- ◆ Fever
- ◆ Gray or clay-colored stools
- ◆ Joint pain
- ◆ Loss of appetite
- ◆ Nausea
- ◆ Pain in the abdomen
- ◆ Vomiting
- ◆ Yellowish eyes and skin, called jaundice

Some people with Hepatitis A have no symptoms, including many children younger than age 6. Older children and adults are more likely to have symptoms.

## Transmission

Hepatitis A spreads through contact with an infected person's stool. Contact can occur by:

- ◆ Eating food made by an infected person who did not wash his or her hands after using the bathroom.
- ◆ Drinking untreated water or eating food washed in untreated water.
- ◆ Having close personal contact with an infected person, such as through sex or caring for someone who is ill.

The virus also is spread by:

- ◆ Men who have sexual contact with men.
- ◆ People who use drugs (injectable and non-injectable drugs).

If you think you have come in contact with the Hepatitis A virus, immediately see your doctor. A dose of the Hepatitis A vaccine or a medicine called hepatitis A immune globulin may protect you from getting the infection.

Your doctor may recommend a vaccine dose or medicine if you live with, have had sex with, or have had close contact with someone who has Hepatitis A or if you:

- ◆ Shared illegal drugs with someone who had Hepatitis A
- ◆ Ate food or drank water possibly containing the Hepatitis A virus

## Prevention

You can protect yourself from Hepatitis A by getting the Hepatitis A vaccine. If you have not had the vaccine, you can take steps to reduce your chance of infection.

You can reduce the chance of contracting Hepatitis A by washing your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water for 15 to 30 seconds:

- ◆ After using the toilet
- ◆ After changing diapers
- ◆ Before/after handling or preparing food

When traveling in a developing country, drink bottled water. Also use bottled water to brush your teeth, make ice cubes, and wash fruits and vegetables.

If you have Hepatitis A, you can reduce your chance of spreading the infection by washing your hands with warm, soapy water after using the toilet and before fixing or eating food. While you are sick, avoid close contact with others, and do not prepare food or serve food to others.

Also, tell your doctor, dentist, and other healthcare professionals that you have Hepatitis A.

Once you have had Hepatitis, you cannot get it again. You can contract other types of viral Hepatitis, though.