

HEPATITIS A

PERSONAL HEALTH FACT SHEET

What is Hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is swelling and tenderness of the liver caused by the Hepatitis A virus.

How is it spread?

The most common way the disease is spread is from person to person by hands contaminated with feces. Outbreaks may be due to water or food being contaminated with feces, such as raw shellfish, fruit, or other foods not cooked to proper temperatures. Symptoms may begin as early as 15 days after exposure or as long as 50 days. The average time from exposure to symptoms is about one month. Most people are contagious for 2 weeks before and for a few days to 1 week after symptoms begin.

How is it treated?

There is no specific treatment for Hepatitis A infection. However, it is important to see a doctor to follow the course of the infection and confirm the diagnosis. Your doctor may recommend supportive measures such as rest, change in diet, or increase in fluid intake.

How can we prevent Hepatitis A?

- Good sanitation and personal hygiene are keys to preventing Hepatitis A.
- Wash your hands with soap and warm water before eating or preparing food, after using the bathroom, or after diapering/toileting a small child.
- If you are exposed to Hepatitis A, there are shots that may prevent disease if given within two weeks of exposure.
- If you will be visiting foreign countries, there is a vaccine that will prevent Hepatitis A infection.

SYMPTOMS OF HEPATITIS A

- Abdominal pain
- Fever
- Tiredness
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes and dark urine)



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