

Fact Sheet

Hepatitis A

What is Hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a virus that can affect the liver.

What are the symptoms?

Some adults and many children who have hepatitis A do not develop symptoms. When symptoms are present, they can range from mild to severe and include:

- Diarrhea.
- Fever.
- Don't want to eat.
- Stomach pains.
- Yellowish color to the skin and the white part of the eyes.

Who can get the infection?

Anyone can get hepatitis A if they haven't had it before. People at the highest risk of infection include:

- People who take care of others with hepatitis A.
- Sexual partners of someone who has the virus.
- People who travel to countries where it is common.
- People who eat raw or shellfish not cooked long enough.

How does a person get it?

The virus is passed in a person's stool. It is usually spread from person to person by putting something in the mouth that has been touched by the stool of someone who already has the virus (even though it might look clean). This includes eating food or drinking water that is not clean, and sometimes by having sex with someone who has hepatitis A.

What is the treatment for it?

Most people get better within a few weeks without medicine; however some people may take up to 3 months to feel well again.

How can it be prevented?

- Wash hands thoroughly after using the toilet and before eating or touching food.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables with clean water, especially those that will not be cooked.
- Ask a healthcare provider before travel if hepatitis A is common to that country.
- Avoid eating raw shellfish.
- There is a vaccine available. Speak to your healthcare provider for more information.