

Hepatitis A Disease

WHAT IS HEPATITIS A?

- Hepatitis A is a contagious liver infection caused by a virus.
- Hepatitis A only occurs as a new infection, and does not become chronic.
- There is no cure for hepatitis A, but your healthcare provider may treat the symptoms.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF HEPATITIS A?

- Symptoms of Hep A may include:
 - Fever
 - Feeling tired
 - Decreased appetite
 - Nausea and/or vomiting
 - Stomach pain or discomfort
 - Dark urine
 - Clay-colored stool
 - Joint pain
 - Yellowing of skin or eyes (Jaundice)
- Usually occur 15-50 days after being exposed to the virus.
- If you have any of the symptoms, please consult with your healthcare provider immediately.

WHO IS AT RISK FOR HEPATITIS A?

People at increased risk for hepatitis A or its complications:

- Illegal/street drug use (injection or non-injection)
- Homeless or transient living
- Incarceration
- Direct contact with someone with Hepatitis A
- Employee or child in a Daycare/Childcare setting
- Adult Daycare or Nursing Home setting
- International travel outside the United States
- People who anticipate close personal contact with an international adoptee
- Men who have sex with men (MSM)
- Chronic liver disease
- Clotting factor disorders
- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection
- Exposure during a common source (food or water-borne) outbreak
- Food Handler



Alabama Department of Public Health Immunization Division

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HOW DOES HEPATITIS A SPREAD?

- Hepatitis A virus is spread by the infected people's contaminated objects, food, drinks, and feces (poop).
- Person-to-person contact
 - An infected person who does not wash his or her hands properly after going to the bathroom and touches other objects, food, or drink.
 - A parent or caregiver who does not properly wash hands after changing diapers or cleaning up the stool of an infected person.
 - Someone who has anal or oral sex with an infected person.
 - During high-risk situations like using street drugs, homelessness, and/or men having sex with men (MSM).
- Contaminated food or water
 - Eating or drinking food or water contaminated with the virus, which may include ready-to-eat food.
 - The food and drinks most likely to be contaminated are fruits, vegetables, shellfish, ice, and water.

WHO SHOULD GET THE HEPATITIS A VACCINE?

- All children at age 1 year
- Anyone who is at increased risk for infection, including those who have
 - Chronic liver disease
 - Clotting factor disorders
 - Used street drugs
 - Been homeless or in transient living
 - Had direct contact with someone with hepatitis A
 - Traveled outside of the United States
 - A man who has sex with men
- Persons who are at increased risk for complications from hepatitis A
- Any person wishing to obtain immunity (protection)

WHICH VACCINE SHOULD I GET?

- For people aged 1 year of age and older, there are two vaccines that protect against hepatitis A disease. Two doses are needed, given at least 6 months apart.
- For people aged 18 years of age and older, there is one combination vaccine that protects against hepatitis A and B disease. Three doses are needed for full protection.



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WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS AND RISKS?

- Vaccine, like any medicine, is capable of causing side effects.
- Most people do not have any side effects from the vaccine, but common minor problems include:
 - Soreness or swelling where the shot was given
 - Fever
 - Headache
 - Tiredness
- The risk of the hepatitis A vaccine causing serious harm or death is extremely rare.

HOW DO I PROTECT MYSELF AND MY FAMILY?

- Hepatitis A vaccine and proper hand washing are the only ways to prevent getting the virus.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

- Ask your healthcare provider or county health department.
- Email the Alabama Department of Public Health, Immunization Division, at immunization@adph.state.al.us or call 1-800-469-4599.
- Go to cdc.gov and type 'Hepatitis A' and/or 'Hepatitis A vaccine' in the SEARCH box.



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