

# Hepatitis A (Hep A)

## What is Hepatitis A (Hep A)?

- Hepatitis A (Hep A) is a contagious liver infection caused by a virus.
- Hep A only occurs as a new infection, and does not become chronic.
- There is no cure for Hep A, but your doctor may prescribe a treatment for the symptoms of Hep A.

## What are the symptoms?

- Symptoms of Hep A usually occur 28 days after getting the virus.
- 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)

## How does Hep A spread?

- Hepatitis A is usually spread when the Hepatitis A virus is taken in by mouth from contact with objects, food, or drinks contaminated by the feces (or stool) of an infected person.
- Person to person contact
  - An infected person does not wash his or her hands properly after going to the bathroom and touches other objects or food
  - A parent or caregiver does not properly wash his or her hands after changing diapers or cleaning up the stool of an infected person
  - Someone has sex or sexual contact with an infected person, not limited to anal-oral contact
- Contaminated food or water
  - Eating or drinking food or water contaminated with the virus, which may include frozen or undercooked food. The food and drinks most likely to be contaminated are fruits, vegetables, shellfish, ice, and water.
- Proper hand washing and Hep A vaccine are the best ways to prevent getting the virus.

## Where can I find more information?

- Ask your doctor or contact your local county health department.
- Email the Alabama Department of Public Health, Immunization Division, at [immunization@adph.state.al.us](mailto:immunization@adph.state.al.us).
- Go to [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov) and type 'Hepatitis A' in the SEARCH box.



Alabama Department of Public Health

Immunization Division, 201 Monroe St, Montgomery, AL 36104

1-800-469-4599 [www.adph.org/imm](http://www.adph.org/imm) 10/10/17

# Hepatitis A Vaccine

## Who should get the Hep A vaccine?

Hepatitis A vaccines were recommended in the United States beginning in 1996. Since then, the number of cases reported each year in the U.S. has dropped from around 31,000 cases to fewer than 1,500 cases.

- Hepatitis A vaccine is an inactivated (killed) vaccine.
- For long-lasting protection, 2 doses are needed. These doses should be given at least 6 months apart.
- Hep A vaccine is recommended to all children at 12 months of age.
- Adults who have not been vaccinated previously and want to be protected against hepatitis A can also get the vaccine.
- Persons at increased risk of infections or those who travel outside of the United States are also recommended to receive the vaccine.
- Persons who have not received the vaccine and have been exposed to Hep A within the previous 2 weeks should also receive the vaccine.

## What are the side effects and risks?

- A 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 Hep A vaccine causing serious harm or death is extremely rare.

## Where can I find more information?

- Ask your doctor or your local county health department.
- Email the Alabama Department of Public Health, Immunization Division, at [immunization@adph.state.al.us](mailto:immunization@adph.state.al.us).
- Go to [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov) and type 'Hepatitis A vaccine' in the SEARCH box.



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