

Prevention and Control Measures Hepatitis A

What is Hepatitis A?

- Hepatitis A is a contagious liver disease that results from infection with the Hepatitis A virus. It can range in severity from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a severe illness lasting several months. A vaccine is available to prevent this disease.

How does Hepatitis A spread?

- The Hepatitis A virus is spread by the fecal-oral route or person-to-person contact. Fecal-oral means that you must get something (object, food, or drink) in your mouth that is contaminated with feces from an infected person.
- Person-to-person transmission results from contact with a household member or sex partner who has Hepatitis A.
- Children may spread the virus to others without ever having symptoms. Infection may result from eating food or drink that is contaminated with the Hepatitis A virus. Hepatitis A is not spread by sneezes or coughs.

What are the symptoms?

- Fever
- Stomach pain, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- Joint pain
- Lack of appetite
- Yellowing of skin and whites of eyes (Jaundice)
- Tiredness
- Dark urine
 - Some individuals do not show symptoms. If symptoms occur, they usually appear 2 to 7 weeks after exposure. Symptoms usually develop over a period of several days and typically last less than 2 months, although some people can be ill for as long as 6 months. Hepatitis A does not become a chronic (long-term) infection. Once you recover from Hepatitis A, you develop antibodies that protect you from the virus for life.
 - If you are a food-service worker, a health-care worker, or a day-care worker: report your illness to your supervisor and do not work until your medical provider says it is ok to return.

Where can I find more information?

- Ask your doctor
- Call the Alabama Department of Public Health, Immunization Division, at 1-800-469-4599
- Go to 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 <https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/immunization/measles.html> 03/09/26

Who is most likely to develop Hepatitis A?

- International travelers.
- Men who have sex with men.
- People who use or inject drugs.
- People whose jobs increase the risk of exposure.
- People who anticipate close personal contact with an international adoptee.
- People are experiencing homelessness.
- Pregnant women/Immunocompromised individuals

Is there a vaccine against Hepatitis A?

- There are two types of hepatitis A vaccines: single-antigen and combination. The single-antigen vaccine protects against hepatitis A and the combination vaccine protects against both hepatitis A and hepatitis B.
- You can only receive the combination vaccine if you're 18 years or older. Make sure to get the full vaccine dosing for long-term protection.

Prevention and Control Measures:

- Initiate control measures *within 3 days of initial case notification*
- Identify close contacts/ high risk
 - All sexual, needle-sharing, and household contacts of persons with hepatitis B are at high risk of acquiring the disease. Case investigation shall be performed to determine exposed household, sexual, and needle-sharing contacts. If the date of infection is unknown, identify sexual and needle-sharing contacts during the previous six months
 - Take careful blood precautions. Cover all cuts and open sores. Throw away used personal items (such as tissues, sanitary napkins, and tampons) in a sealed plastic bag. Wash your hands well after touching your own blood or body fluids. Wash clothing and linen soiled with blood in detergent and water. Tell all sex partners you have hepatitis B. Use condoms during sexual intercourse unless your partner has had hepatitis B or has been vaccinated against hepatitis B. Tell dentists and doctors that you are hepatitis B positive so that they can use extra precaution. Advise sexual partners and family members to see their doctors about screening and vaccination for hepatitis B. Avoid sharing chewing gum, toothbrushes, razors, scissors, nail files or anything that may have come in contact with your blood or body fluids. Never share syringes and needles. Never donate blood, plasma, body organs, tissue, or sperm.
- Obtain immunization history of case/contacts



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- Provide education that includes basic information about the disease
 - As needed, inform of communicability, incubation period, symptoms, transmission, complications, and isolation
 - Instruct cases and contacts on the necessary isolation or any other restrictions
 - Counsel contacts to watch for signs or symptoms of occurring within 6 months after exposure and to seek medical care promptly
 - Their PCP should be notified, and proper specimens taken

****Note that the steps are not ordered by priority since several of these steps are conducted simultaneously****



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