



Hepatitis A

What is Hepatitis A?

"Hepatitis" means inflammation of the liver. Hepatitis A is a contagious liver disease that results from infection with the Hepatitis A virus.

How is it spread?

Hepatitis A virus is found in the stool and blood of people who are infected. The Hepatitis A virus is spread when someone ingests the virus usually through:

Close person to person contact with an infected person such as through sexual contact (like oral-anal sex), or caring for someone who is ill.

From contact with objects, food or drinks contaminated by the stool of an infected person.

Through food or water contaminated with the Hepatitis A virus.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Some people with Hepatitis A do not have any symptoms. If you do have symptoms, they may include the following: fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, clay-colored bowel movements, joint pain, and, jaundice (yellow color in the skin or the eyes). Almost all people who get Hepatitis A recover completely and do not have any lasting liver damage.

Should a person with Hepatitis A be isolated?

Exclude from work/school until 7 days after onset of jaundice (or 7 days after symptom onset if no jaundice).

Frequent hand washing with soap and warm water after using the bathroom, changing a diaper, or before preparing food can help prevent the spread of Hepatitis A.

What type of treatment and care should be given?

There are no special treatments for Hepatitis A. Rest, adequate nutrition, and fluids are recommended. People with Hepatitis A should check with a health professional before taking any prescription pills, supplements, or over-the-counter medications, which can potentially damage the liver. Alcohol should be avoided.

Is there a vaccination against this disease?

Vaccination with the Hepatitis A vaccine is the best method of prevention. Vaccination is recommended for travelers to certain countries, and for people at high risk for infection with the virus.

If you or your child requires vaccination against Hepatitis A, contact your physician or call (441) 278-6460 the Child Health Immunization Clinic located at the Hamilton Health Centre to be immunized as soon as possible.

Adapted from: "Viral Hepatitis." Centers for Disease Control AndPrevention,2020

<https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav/afaq.htm>

Assessed 09 Feb 2023