

Hepatitis A

1. What is hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a highly contagious (spreads person-to-person) liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus (germ). Mild cases can last a few weeks while severe cases can last several months.

2. How is hepatitis A spread?

Hepatitis A spreads by putting something in your mouth (object, food, or drink) that has been in contact with the feces (poop) of an infected person. Hepatitis A can be spread by:

- Forgetting to wash your hands after using the bathroom or changing diapers
- Having sexual contact with infected partner(s)
- Consuming food or drinks that are contaminated by the virus

3. Who is at risk for hepatitis A?

People who are homeless are at the highest risk for getting hepatitis A. Anyone can get hepatitis A, but you are at a higher risk if you:

- Travel or live in countries where hepatitis A is common
- Live with someone who has hepatitis A
- Use recreational drugs
- Are men who have sex with men
- Have sexual contact with someone who has hepatitis A
- Are homeless

4. What are the symptoms of hepatitis A?

Not everyone shows symptoms. If symptoms develop, they usually appear 2 to 6 weeks after infection. Symptoms can include:

- Fever
- Vomiting
- Grey stool
- Feeling tired
- Stomach pain
- Joint pain
- Loss of appetite
- Dark urine
- Yellowing of the skin and eyes
- Nausea
- (pee)

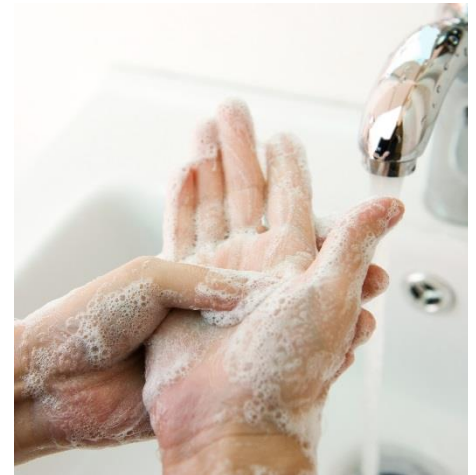
5. How is hepatitis A treated?

Treatment includes rest, good nutrition, fluids, and medical monitoring. Some people may need to be hospitalized. Most people who get hepatitis A recover completely and don't have lasting liver damage. It's important to see a doctor if you have symptoms of hepatitis A.

6. How can hepatitis A be prevented?

The best way to prevent hepatitis A is by getting vaccinated. The vaccine is safe and effective. Visit your doctor's office, or call 2-1-1 to find a local clinic or doctor. You can also prevent the spread of hepatitis A by washing hands with soap and warm water:

- Before eating or preparing food
- After using the bathroom or changing diapers



Who should get vaccinated?

- All children at age 1-year
- Travelers to countries where hepatitis A is common
- Family and caregivers of adoptees from countries where hepatitis A is common
- Men who have sex with men
- Recreational drug users
- People with chronic liver disease or hepatitis B or C
- People with clotting-factor disorders
- Homeless people

For more information:

Pasadena Public Health
Department (626) 744-6089

Los Angeles County,
Department of Public Health
<http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/Diseases/HepA.htm>

California Department of Public Health
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/OVHP.aspx>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav/index.htm>

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Hepatitis A Infection Prevention & Control

Hepatitis A is a highly contagious liver infection caused by the hepatitis A virus. The hepatitis A virus is usually transmitted through the fecal-oral route, either through person-to-person contact or consumption of contaminated food or water. Contamination can occur when infected persons don't wash their hands properly after using the bathroom and then touching other objects or food items. Surfaces that are frequently touched should be cleaned and sanitized often including:

- Toilet Room Surfaces
- Kitchen Surfaces
- Doorknobs
- Recreation Equipment
- Light Switch Plates
- Phones
- Computer Keyboards
- Railings
- High Chairs
- Tables and Chairs
- Wheelchairs and Walkers
- Remote Controls

Effective Disinfectants

Chlorine Bleach: Mix and use the chlorine solution within 20 minutes. Allow 1 minute of contact time and then rinse with water.

- **5000 ppm:** 1 and 2/3 cups bleach in 1 gallon water. Use for stainless steel, food/mouth contact items, tile floors, nonporous surfaces, counters, sinks and toilets.

Other Disinfectants:

Other disinfectants may be approved for use if they are effective against hepatitis A. This must be clearly indicated on specification sheets or product label.

Note: Most Quaternary Ammonium disinfectants are **not effective** against hepatitis A. They may only be used if specifically stated on their label or specification sheets they are effective against hepatitis A.

Specific Cleaning Methods

Wear Gloves and Protect Your Clothing.

- **Hard Surfaces**
 - Disinfect surface with bleach, or other approved disinfectant ensuring 1 minute of contact time. If surface is in a food preparation area, make sure to rinse with water after.
- **Surfaces that are Corrodible or Damageable by Bleach**
 - Use registered products effective against hepatitis A.

For more information on cleaning and infection control for hepatitis A, call Environmental Health: (626) 744-6004

Steps to Clean Spills of Vomit or Feces

- Use personal protective equipment such as gloves, masks and gowns.
- Block-off area immediately.
- Clean up visible debris using disposable absorbent material (paper towels or other type of disposable cloths) and minimize aerosols.
- Discard soiled items carefully in an impervious plastic bag.
- Thoroughly clean affected area
- Disinfect area and objects surrounding the contamination with an appropriate disinfectant effective against hepatitis A. See box to the left "Effective Disinfectants" for 5000 ppm sanitizing solution.
- Take off gloves, gown and mask, in that order, and discard before exiting contaminated clean-up area.
- Place discarded PPE in an impervious plastic bag.
- Re-glove and transport bag to a secure trash container; do not allow the bag to come into contact with clothing.
- Always wash your hands after handling any contaminated material, trash or waste.

Proper Handling

- Use chemicals in well-ventilated areas.
- Avoid contact between incompatible chemicals.
- Prevent chemical contact with food during cleaning.
- Handle contaminated material as little as possible and with minimal agitation to reduce aerosols.
- Manage waste safely and dispose in a secure trash container.