



HEPATITIS A FACT SHEET

Prevent Hepatitis A by getting vaccinated!

Get more information on viral hepatitis by accessing <http://www/cdc.gov/hepatitis>

Or write:

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Division of Viral Hepatitis, Mailstop G37
Atlanta, GA 30333

What is Hepatitis A and is it a serious problem?

Hepatitis A is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV). It is found in the stool (poop) of persons with hepatitis A. Good personal hygiene and proper sanitation can help prevent this disease. Hepatitis A usually does not cause death.

How do you know if you have hepatitis A?

Children who are infected often have no symptoms. Three of every four adults who get hepatitis A have symptoms. Symptoms usually develop over a period of several days.

Symptoms may include:

- ✓ Yellow eyes
- ✓ Dark urine
- ✓ Nausea
- ✓ Fever
- ✓ Tiredness
- ✓ Loss of Appetite
- ✓ Stomach ache
- ✓ Vomiting

How is it spread?

HAV is spread from person to person by putting anything in the mouth that has been contaminated with the stool of a person with hepatitis A. The virus is easily spread in areas where there is poor sanitation or poor personal hygiene. Persons with hepatitis A can spread the virus to household members or to sexual partners. Casual contact as in the usual office, factory or school setting, does not spread the virus.

In addition to getting hepatitis A directly from infected people, you can get hepatitis A by:

- ✓ Eating fruits, vegetables, or other food that may have become contaminated during handling
- ✓ Eating raw shellfish harvested from sewage-contaminated water
- ✓ Swallowing contaminated water or ice.

How can you protect yourself from getting infected with HAV?

- ✓ You should always wash your hands after using the bathroom, changing a diaper, or before preparing or eating food.
- ✓ Get vaccinated. Hepatitis A vaccines provide long-term protection against the virus and can be given to persons one year of age and older.

Who should get vaccinated?

- ✓ Persons who share a household or have sexual contact with someone who has hepatitis A
- ✓ Men who have sex with men
- ✓ Persons who use street drugs
- ✓ Persons with chronic liver disease
- ✓ Children and employees in child care centers (especially centers that have children in diapers) where a child or an employee has hepatitis A
- ✓ Travelers to countries where hepatitis A is common
- ✓ Persons with clotting factor disorders such as hemophilia
- ✓ Residents and staff of institutions for developmentally disabled persons when a resident or an employee has hepatitis A
- ✓ Workers who handle HAV-infected animals or work with HAV in a research laboratory setting (This does not include laboratories doing routine testing).

How is the vaccine administered?

Children and adults need hepatitis A vaccine for long-term protection. You will either need two shots of hepatitis A vaccine or three shots of the combination hepatitis A and hepatitis B vaccine. After getting your first shot, your doctor or nurse will tell you when to return for the second shot.

Immune globulin (IG) might be used for short-term protection in two situations:

- ✓ For travelers instead of, or in addition to hepatitis A vaccine
- ✓ For unvaccinated persons, who have recently been exposed to HAV

Immune globulin must be given within two weeks of exposure to HAV in order to work.