



www.CDC.gov/hepatitis
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Hepatitis A Fact Sheet

Description	<p>Hepatitis A is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus. Hepatitis A can affect anyone. In the United States, hepatitis A can occur in situations ranging from isolated cases of disease to widespread epidemics.</p> <p>Good personal hygiene and proper sanitation can help prevent hepatitis A. Vaccines are also available for long-term prevention of hepatitis A virus infection in persons 12 months of age and older. Immune globulin is available for short-term prevention of hepatitis A virus infection in individuals of all ages.</p>
SIGNS & SYMPTOMS	Adults will have signs and symptoms more often than children.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• jaundice• fatigue• abdominal pain• loss of appetite• nausea• diarrhea• fever
CAUSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hepatitis A virus (HAV)
LONG-TERM EFFECTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is no chronic (long-term) infection.• Once you have had hepatitis A, you cannot get it again.• About 15% of people infected with HAV will have prolonged or relapsing symptoms over a 6-9 month period.
TRANSMISSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HAV is found in the stool (feces) of persons with hepatitis A.• HAV is usually spread from person to person by putting something in the mouth (even though it might look clean) that has been contaminated with the stool of a person with hepatitis A.
PERSONS AT RISK for INFECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Household contacts of infected persons• Sex contacts of infected persons• Persons, especially children, living in areas with increased rates of hepatitis A during the baseline period of 1987-1997• Travelers to countries where hepatitis A is common• Men who have sex with men• Users of injection and non-injection drugs
PREVENTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hepatitis A vaccine is the best protection.• Short-term protection against hepatitis A is available from immune globulin. It can be given before and within 2 weeks of coming in contact with HAV.• Always wash your hands with soap and water after using the bathroom, changing a diaper, and before preparing and eating food.

VACCINE RECOMMENDATIONS	Vaccine is recommended for the following persons from 12 months of age and older: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All children at age 1 year (i.e., 12–23 months)• Travelers to countries where hepatitis A is common• Men who have sex with men• Users of injection and non-injection drugs• Persons with clotting-factor disorders (e.g., hemophilia)• Persons with chronic liver disease• Children living in areas with increased rates of hepatitis A during the baseline period of 1987-1997 (view map)• Persons who work with HAV in a laboratory setting
TRENDS & STATISTICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hepatitis A occurs in epidemics both nationwide and in communities.• Before hepatitis A vaccine became available, the number of reported cases reached 35,000 per year.• In the late 1990s, hepatitis A vaccine was more widely used and the number of cases reached historic lows.• One-third of Americans have evidence of past infection (immunity).