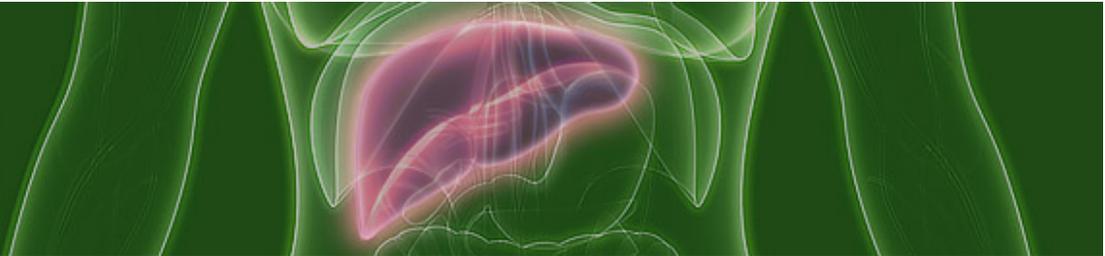


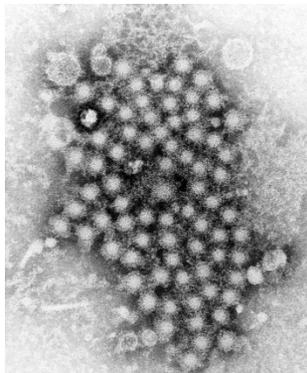
Hepatitis A: What You Need to Know

Hepatitis A



What is Hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a contagious viral disease of the liver, transmitted person-to-person either by the fecal-oral route or by consuming contaminated food or water. Symptoms typically include fatigue, lack of appetite, nausea, stomach pains, and jaundice (yellowing of the eyes or skin). In addition, urine can turn dark, and stool can turn light (clay-colored). However, some individuals may not have symptoms at all, particularly children less than 6 years of age. Regardless, these individuals are still contagious. Hepatitis A is usually self-limiting, resolving within 2 months and usually not resulting in chronic infection. The best way to prevent Hepatitis A infection is by getting vaccinated.



Hepatitis A in the United States and Virginia

Multiple states across the country are currently experiencing Hepatitis A outbreaks, particularly among high-risk populations such as person who use injection and non-injection drugs, homeless individuals, and men who have sexual contact with men (MSM). Hepatitis A exposures have also been found among food service workers, who can infect other employees or restaurant patrons. Since these outbreaks were first identified in 2016, more than 15,000 cases and 8,500 hospitalizations (57% of cases) have been reported in the United States. As of April, 2019, Virginia has been formally considered an “Outbreak State” for Hepatitis A. From 2011-2015, an average of 38 Hepatitis A cases were reported each year, while 83 cases were reported in 2018.

How is Hepatitis A Spread?

- Person-to-person contact (through the fecal-oral route). This can occur:
 - When an infected person does not wash his or her hands properly after going to the bathroom and touches other objects or food;
 - When a parent or caregiver does not properly wash his or her hands after changing diapers or cleaning up the stool of an infected person;
 - When someone has sex or sexual contact with an infected person.
- Consuming contaminated food or water
 - Usually occurs with fruits, vegetables, shellfish, ice, and water.
 - Is more likely to occur in countries where hepatitis A is common and in areas where there are poor sanitary conditions or poor personal hygiene.



What can you do to prevent Hepatitis A?

Get vaccinated! It is recommended to get two doses of Hepatitis A vaccine for best protection, each scheduled at least 6 months apart. Children are recommended to receive the Hepatitis A vaccine as part of their routine vaccinations schedule, administered at 1 year of age (12-23 months). If not vaccinated as children, adults may also receive two doses of the vaccine, also scheduled 6 months apart.

If you would like to receive your Hepatitis A vaccine at your local health department's immunization clinic, please see the information below. All immunization clinics are walk-in on a first-come, first-served basis:

[Caroline County Health Department](#) | 804-633-5465 | 17202 Richmond Turnpike, Milford, VA 22514

- Wednesdays 8am-12pm

[Fredericksburg Health Department](#) | 540-899-4142 | 608 Jackson St., Fredericksburg, VA 22401

- Tuesdays 8am-12pm and Fridays 8am-10am

[King George Health Department](#) | 540-775-3111 | 8081-8107 Kings Highway, King George, VA 22485

- Tuesdays 8am-12pm

[Spotsylvania Health Department](#) | 540-507-7400 | 9104 Courthouse Road, Spotsylvania Courthouse, VA 22553

- Mondays 8am-12pm

[Stafford Health Department](#) | 540-659-3101 | 1300 Courthouse Road, Stafford VA 22554

- Fridays 8am-12pm

The Rappahannock Area Health District would like to encourage vaccination for Hepatitis A among all individuals, however it is most highly recommended for individuals at high risk of Hepatitis A infection, including:

- Persons traveling to countries with high or intermediate endemicity of hepatitis A (e.g., tourists, immigrants and their children returning to their country of origin to visit friends or relatives, military personnel, missionaries, and others who work or study abroad)
- MSM (men who have sex with men)
- Injecting and non-injecting drug users
- Persons who live in communities with high rates of hepatitis A (e.g., American Indian, Alaska Native, and Pacific Islander communities and some religious communities)
- Homeless individuals
- Persons who work with non-human primates

- Persons with clotting factor disorders, such as Hemophilia, or chronic liver disease
- people who have sexual contact with someone who has Hepatitis A
- Any person who wishes to be immune to Hepatitis A

Recommendations for healthcare providers:

- Screen patients for hepatitis A risk factors (e.g., drug use, homelessness, incarceration, MSM, and chronic liver disease).
- Recommend and administer hepatitis A vaccine to at-risk patients, regardless of the original presenting complaint or the type of clinical facility. In particular, the emergency department may be an individual's only interaction with the healthcare system and is an important opportunity for prevention.
- Record immunizations in the Virginia Immunization Information System (VIIS).
- Consider hepatitis A as a diagnosis in anyone with jaundice or clinically compatible symptoms.
- Immediately report all persons diagnosed with hepatitis A to the local health department to ensure timely case investigation and follow-up of contacts.

If you are having signs and symptoms consistent with a Hepatitis A infection:

- Seek medical attention immediately, and avoid contact with individuals that are high-risk of infection, such as the elderly, pregnant women, infants, and individuals with underlying medical conditions.
- Stay home from work, particularly if you work in food service, as a healthcare or childcare worker.
- Do not prepare food or serve food to others
- Frequently wash hands with soap and warm water after using the bathroom, changing a diaper, or before preparing or eating food.

For more information on Hepatitis A, please see the resources below:

Hepatitis A Fact Sheet | Spanish Version
(as attachments)

Hepatitis A Vaccine Information Sheet (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

(as attachments)

For Clinicians: [The Pink Book chapter on Hepatitis A](#)
(as attachment)

Visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention webpage for Hepatitis A](#)