

# Hepatitis A



Infectious Disease  
Epidemiology &  
Prevention Division

March 2026

## What is Hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a highly contagious liver infection caused by hepatitis A virus (HAV). It can range from a mild illness, lasting a few weeks, to a severe illness lasting a few months. Hepatitis A cannot become chronic, meaning that once you get sick you will not get sick again.

### What are the symptoms?



Abdominal  
Pain



Fever



Nausea



Jaundice



Diarrhea



Vomiting

### How long do symptoms last?

- Symptoms usually appear two to six weeks after infection
- They are more likely to occur in adults than in children
- Usually last fewer than two months, but some people can be sick as long as six months

### How is hepatitis A diagnosed?

Anyone with symptoms of hepatitis A should contact a healthcare provider immediately. A doctor will confirm infection with a blood test. People with symptoms should not attend work or school while sick.

### How is hepatitis A treated?

There is no specific treatment for hepatitis A. Individuals who become ill should seek healthcare immediately; hospitalization may be required for those who have a severe infection. The best way to prevent hepatitis A is by getting vaccinated before you become sick.

## How can it be prevented?

### VACCINATION



The hepatitis A vaccine is the best protection against the virus and is easy to receive from healthcare providers and pharmacies.

### STAY HOME



Stay home from work, school, or daycare especially if you handle food or work in healthcare or childcare.

### PREPARE AND COOK



If you are sick, do not cook or prepare food or drinks for other people.

## How does it spread?

Spread occurs when an infected person sheds the virus through their feces (poop). People are most commonly exposed when they do not wash their hands, or via direct contact with an infected person. Individuals at higher risk for hepatitis A, include:

- People who use illegal drugs (injection and non-injection)
- Homeless individuals or people who live in temporary living conditions
- Those that are in jail or prison
- Men who have sex with men
- Close direct contacts of at-risk individuals

For more information, visit the  
Indiana Department of Health  
[Hepatitis A webpage.](#)

