

## FACT SHEET: HEPATITIS A

**Hepatitis A is a contagious liver infection caused by the hepatitis A virus.**

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Symptoms start 15 to 50 days (usually 28 days) from the time you were exposed to the virus. The first symptoms of infection may include:

- Fever
- Vomiting
- Upset stomach
- Dark pee, pale poop (greyish colour)
- Loss of appetite
- Jaundice (yellow skin or yellow whites of eyes)
- Stomach cramps
- Nausea

Symptoms usually last less than 2 months, but for some people symptoms last 6 months.

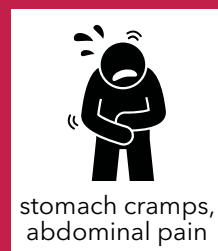
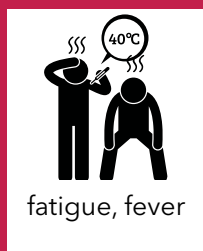
### HOW IS IT SPREAD?

Hepatitis A spreads from person to person through contact with a sick person's poop, through sexual contact with a sick person, or through eating or drinking something contaminated with the virus.

### HOW LONG ARE PEOPLE CONTAGIOUS?

A person with hepatitis A is contagious from two weeks before symptoms start to one week after jaundice (or two weeks after symptoms started if there is no jaundice).

### KNOW THE SYMPTOMS OF HEPATITIS A



continued ...

# Hepatitis A

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## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE BEEN AROUND SOMEONE WITH HEPATITIS A?

- Talk to your healthcare provider.
- If you've never had hepatitis A vaccine or infection, you may need the vaccine.
- Don't share items that go in the mouth such as cigarettes, cups, etc.
- If you are having sex with an infected person, use a condom.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE HEPATITIS A?

- Talk to your healthcare provider, a blood test is needed to make the diagnosis.
- Clean your hands often.
- Don't make food for other people.
- Clean and disinfect your washroom and other items touched often.
- Let other people know about your infection if you have shared items with them, slept in the same bed as them, lived with them or prepared food for them.

## HOW IT CAN BE PREVENTED

### 1. Get the hepatitis A vaccine

The hepatitis A vaccine is free for people who:

- Live with someone with hepatitis A
- Has sex with someone with hepatitis A
- Use intravenous drugs
- Have a chronic liver disease such as hepatitis B or C
- Men who have sex with men

For full protection, you need 2 doses of hepatitis A vaccine, 6 months apart from one another.

### 2. Don't share drugs or drug equipment and supplies or anything that has been in someone else's mouth

### 3. Have safe sex (use condoms and dental dams)

### 4. Wash your hands often

### 5. Clean and disinfect your bathroom often

Use bleach and water to disinfect. Hepatitis A can live on surfaces outside the body for months.

**TO REDUCE  
YOUR RISK:**



wash your hands



don't share



get vaccinated!

## MORE INFORMATION



### Southwestern Public Health

**St. Thomas Site**

519-631-9900

**Woodstock Site**

519-421-9901

**1-800-922-0096 | [www.swpublichealth.ca](http://www.swpublichealth.ca)**