

# Hepatitis A Disease

## What is hepatitis A?

- Hepatitis A is a contagious liver infection caused by a virus.
- Hepatitis A only occurs as a new infection, and does not become chronic.
- There is no cure for hepatitis A, but your healthcare provider may treat the symptoms.

## What are the symptoms of hepatitis A?

- Symptoms of Hep A may include:
  - Fever
  - Feeling tired
  - Decreased appetite
  - Nausea and/or vomiting
  - Stomach pain or discomfort
  - Dark urine
  - Clay-colored stool
  - Joint pain
  - Yellowing of skin or eyes (jaundice)
- Usually occur 15-50 days after being exposed to the virus.
- If you have any of the symptoms, please consult with your healthcare provider immediately.

## How does hepatitis A spread?

- Hepatitis A virus is spread by the infected people's contaminated objects, food, drinks, and feces (poop).
- Person-to-person contact
  - An infected person who does not wash his or her hands properly after going to the bathroom and touches other objects, food, or drink.
  - A parent or caregiver who does not properly wash hands after changing diapers or cleaning up the stool of an infected person.
  - Someone who has sex or sexual contact with an infected person, not limited to anal-oral contact.
  - During high-risk situations like using streets drugs, homelessness, and/or having anal and oral sex.
- Contaminated food or water
  - Eating or drinking food or water contaminated with the virus, which may include ready-to-eat food. The food and drinks most likely to be contaminated are fruits, vegetables, shellfish, ice, and water.

## How do I protect myself and my family?

- Hepatitis A vaccine and proper hand washing are the only ways to prevent getting the virus.



Alabama Department of Public Health

Immunization Division, 201 Monroe St, Montgomery, AL 36104

1-800-469-4599 [www.adph.org/imm](http://www.adph.org/imm) 10/10/17

# Hepatitis A Vaccine

## Who should get the hepatitis A vaccine?

- All children at age 1 year
- Anyone who is at increased risk for infection, including those who have
  - Used street drug
  - Men having sex with men
  - Homeless and transient living
  - Direct contact with someone with hepatitis A
  - Travel outside of the United States
  - Have an occupational risk
  - Have chronic liver disease
  - Have clotting factor disorders
- Persons who are at increased risk for complications from hepatitis A
- Any person wishing to obtain immunity (protection).

## Which vaccine should I get?

- For people aged 1 year of age and older, there are two vaccines that protect against hepatitis A disease. Two doses are needed given at least 6 months apart.
- For people aged 18 years of age and older, there is one combination vaccine that protect against hepatitis A and B disease. Three doses are needed for full protection.

## What are the side effects and risks?

- Vaccine, like any medicine, is capable of causing side effects.
- Most people do not have any side effects from the vaccine, but common minor problems include:
  - Soreness or swelling where the shot was given
  - Fever
  - Headache
  - Tiredness
- The risk of the hepatitis A vaccine causing serious harm or death is extremely rare.

## Where can I find more information?

- Ask your healthcare provider or county health department.
- Email the Alabama Department of Public Health, Immunization Division, at [immunization@adph.state.al.us](mailto:immunization@adph.state.al.us) or call 1-800-469-4599.
- Go to [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov) and type 'Hepatitis A' and/or 'Hepatitis A vaccine' in the SEARCH box.



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