

Hepatitis A

What is **Hepatitis A**?



Hepatitis A is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus.

What are the symptoms of **Hepatitis A**?

Most symptoms of **Hepatitis A** infection are mild. Many people have no symptoms. If symptoms do occur, they usually come on quickly and may include fever, tiredness, loss of appetite, nausea, abdominal discomfort, dark urine and jaundice (yellowing of skin and eyes).

How do you get it?

Hepatitis A is a virus spread from person to person by putting something in the mouth that has been contaminated with the stool of a person with hepatitis A. This type of transmission is called “fecal-oral”. For this reason, the virus is more easily spread in areas where there are poor sanitary conditions or where good personal hygiene is not practiced. Most infections result from household members. Casual contact, as in the usual office, factory or school setting does not spread the virus.

How do I know if I have **Hepatitis A?** A blood test is used to diagnose Hepatitis A. Talk to your doctor or someone from the local health department if you suspect you have been exposed to hepatitis A or any type of viral hepatitis.

How can you protect yourself and your family from **Hepatitis A**?

Always wash your hands after using the bathroom, changing a diaper, or before preparing or eating food. Two products are available to prevent Hepatitis A virus infections: immune globulin and Hepatitis A vaccine.

- Immune globulin is a preparation of antibodies that can be given before exposure for short-term protection against Hepatitis A and for persons who have already been exposed to the Hepatitis A virus. This must be given within two weeks after exposure for maximum protection.
- Hepatitis A vaccine has been licensed in the United States for use in persons 2 years of age or older. The vaccine is recommended for persons who are more likely to get Hepatitis A virus infection or are more likely to get seriously ill if they do.

Any questions, contact Volusia County Health Department, (386) 274-0561 or (386) 274 0633.