

FACT SHEET ON HEPATITIS A

What is Hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a highly contagious infection caused by the Hepatitis A virus. It can range in severity from mild illness lasting a few weeks to a severe illness lasting several months.

What are the signs and symptoms of Hepatitis A?

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Loss of Appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal Pain
- Dark urine
- Grey-colored stools
- Joint pain
- Jaundice

How does this virus spread?

- Hepatitis A is usually spread when a person ingests fecal matter – even in microscopic amounts – from contact with objects, food, or drinks contaminated by feces or stool from an infected person
- Hepatitis A can be spread when:
 - An infected person does not wash his/her hands properly after going to the bathroom and then touches objects or food
 - A caregiver does not properly wash his or her hands after changing diapers or cleaning up the stool of an infected person

Can Hepatitis A be prevented?

- Yes. The best way to prevent Hepatitis A is by getting vaccinated. The Hepatitis A vaccine is recommended for all children, and people with certain risk factors and medical conditions.
- The Hepatitis A vaccine is safe and effective and given as 2 shots, 6 months apart. Both shots are needed for long-term protection.

How can you reduce your risk of spreading or catching the Hepatitis A virus?

- Always wash your hands thoroughly after using the restroom and when you come in contact with an infected person's blood, stools or other bodily fluid.
 - The CDC recommends washing your hands often with soap and water for a total of 20 seconds each time.
- Avoid unclean food and water.

For more information visit the County of San Diego, Health & Human Services Department website at:

http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/community_epidemiology/dc/Hepatitis_A.html