

Hepatitis A: What You Need to Know

What is hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a **highly contagious, vaccine-preventable**, liver infection caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV). The virus is one of several types of hepatitis that cause liver inflammation (swelling) and affect your liver's ability to function.

Basic Facts

- Very rare
- Fewer than 20,000 US cases per year
- Treatable by a medical professional
- Requires a medical diagnosis
- Lab tests or imaging always required
- Spreads through contaminated food or water
- Short-term: resolves within days to weeks

Hepatitis A
can be
prevented with
a safe and
effective
vaccine.



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How it Spreads

Hepatitis A spreads by eating or drinking contaminated food or water, or by having contact with someone who is infected. **Hepatitis A** is very contagious, and often spreads before an infected person knows they're sick.

Symptoms

- Yellow skin or eyes
- Not wanting to eat
- Upset stomach
- Throwing up
- Stomach pain
- Fever
- Diarrhea
- Joint pain
- Feeling tired
- Dark urine/
light-colored stools

Diagnosis & Treatment

A doctor will discuss your symptoms and take a blood sample. To treat the symptoms of **hepatitis A**, doctors usually recommend rest, good nutrition, and drinking clear fluids to prevent dehydration.

Prevention

The best way to prevent **hepatitis A** is vaccination. The key to preventing the spread of **hepatitis A** is good hygiene, especially frequent hand-washing.

