

# Facts About Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is a highly contagious, vaccine-preventable, liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus. Mild cases can last a few weeks, while severe cases can last several months and can result in death.

## What are the symptoms?

Not all people infected with hepatitis A will experience illness. Adults are more likely than young children to have symptoms. If symptoms develop, they can range from moderate to severe and may include: fever, loss of appetite, tiredness, muscle aches, nausea, upper right abdominal pain, dark urine (like cola or strong tea), light colored stools, jaundice (a yellow color to the skin or whites of the eyes), and occasionally diarrhea.

## How is it spread?

Hepatitis A virus is found in the stool of people infected with hepatitis A. It is spread when a person puts something in their mouth that has been contaminated with the stool of an infected person. Infected persons who do not have symptoms are still able to spread the virus.

## How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms usually appear 28 to 30 days after exposure (can range from 15 to 50 days).

## How do you prevent a hepatitis A infection?



The best way to protect against hepatitis A is to get a hepatitis A shot (called the hepatitis A vaccine), which is available for anyone age 1 year and older. People who have not had the disease or been vaccinated and who are exposed to hepatitis A virus can be given the vaccine as protection. For more information about the hepatitis A vaccine, call the Mesa County Public Health Clinic at 970-248-6900.

## How can you keep it from spreading if you have it?



Contamination can be avoided through good hygiene by both infected and non-infected persons (careful hand washing after using the bathroom, before preparing, eating, or sharing food, and after changing diapers).

## How is it treated?



Most often with rest, fluids, and avoiding things that can harm the liver further, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) and alcohol. There are no medicines to treat hepatitis A infection.

## For more information contact:

Mesa County Public Health  
(970) 254-4120  
[health.mesacounty.us](http://health.mesacounty.us)



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