

Viral Hepatitis

What You Need To Know

	Hepatitis A	Hepatitis B	Hepatitis C
What is it?	Hepatitis A is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV). In the United States, HAV can occur in situations ranging from isolated cases of disease to widespread epidemics.	Hepatitis B is a serious disease caused by a virus (HBV) that attacks the liver. HBV can cause lifelong infection, cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver, liver cancer, liver failure, and death.	HCV is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis C virus, which is found in the blood of persons who have this disease.
How can I get it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eating raw shellfish harvested from sewage contaminated water • Swallowing contaminated water or ice • Eating fruits, vegetables, or other food that may have become contaminated during handling • Use of street drugs • Usually spread person to person • People with HAV can spread it to households members or sexual contacts <p><i>HAV can affect anyone, and is usually spread from person to person by putting something in the mouth that has been contaminated with the stool of a person infected with hepatitis A.</i></p> <p>Casual contact as in the usual office, factory, or school settings, does not spread the virus.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct contact with the blood or body fluids of an infected person • Having sex or sharing needles with an infected person • Use of street drugs • Exposure to your infected mother at birth <p>Babies who get HBV at birth may have the virus for the rest of their lives. They can spread the disease, and get cirrhosis of the liver or liver cancer.</p> <p><i>Sometimes, people who are infected with HBV never recover fully from the infection. They can remain infectious for the rest of their lives. In the United States, about one million people carry HBV.</i></p> <p>Hepatitis B is not spread through food, water or by casual contact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using of tattoo or body piercing tools contaminated with someone else's blood • The artist or piercer not following good health practices, including hand-washing and using disposable gloves • Sexual contact with multiple partners • Use of street drugs <p><i>The infection is spread by contact with the blood of an infected person. Almost 4 million Americans are infected with the Hepatitis C virus.</i></p> <p>Hepatitis C virus is not spread by: Breast feeding, sneezing, hugging, coughing, food or water, sharing eating utensils or drinking glasses, casual contact</p>
Who is at risk?	<p>You are at risk if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have household or sexual contacts with someone who has HAV • Travel to countries where HAC is common and where clean water and proper sewage disposal are not available • Are a man who has sex with men • Use street drugs • Work in child care centers (especially settings that have children in diapers) • Live or work in an institution for developmentally disabled persons • Work in research laboratory setting, (excluding laboratories doing routine testing) and handle HAC-infected nonhuman primates • Receive factor concentrates for a clotting factor disorder 	<p>You're at risk if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have sexual contact with an infected person • Have multiple sex partners • Are a man who has sex with a man • Have household contact with someone who has chronic HBV infection • Work with human blood products • Shoot street drugs • Live or work in a home for the developmentally disabled • Have hemophilia • Travel to areas where HBV is common • Or your parents were born in Southeast Asia, Africa, the Amazon Basin in South America. The Pacific Islands, and the Middle East <p><i>One out of 20 people in the United States will get HBV at some time if not vaccinated.</i></p>	<p>You are at risk if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ever injected street drugs, even if you experimented a few times many years ago • Were treated for clotting problems with a blood product made before 1987 • Received a blood transfusion or solid organ transplant (e.g., kidney, liver, heart) before July 1992, or you were notified that you received blood that possibly contained HCV • Were ever on long-term kidney dialysis <p><i>Many people who are at risk for HCV are at risk for hepatitis A and hepatitis B. Check with your doctor to see if you should get hepatitis A and hepatitis B vaccines.</i></p> <p>Could I already have hepatitis C? <i>Ask your doctor for a blood test for hepatitis C.</i></p>
Symptoms	<p>Symptoms of all types of hepatitis are similar and can include one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Fever •Fatigue •Loss of appetite •Nausea •Vomiting •Abdominal pain •Clay-colored bowel movements •Join pain 		

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Prevention

Hepatitis A

Always wash your hands after using the bathroom, changing a diaper, and before eating or preparing food.

Hepatitis A vaccines provide long-term protection against hepatitis A and are licensed for use in persons 2 years of age and older.

Who should receive hepatitis A vaccine?

- Persons who work in or travel to areas where hepatitis A is common (first dose should be given at least 4 weeks before travel)
- Children in communities with high rates of hepatitis A, such as Alaska Native villages, American Indian reservations, and Pacific Islander and selected religious communities.
- Men who have sex with men
- Persons who use street drugs
- Persons with chronic liver disease
- Persons with clotting factor disorders, such as hemophilia
- Persons who work with HAV-infected nonhuman primates or work with HAV in a research setting (hepatitis A vaccine is not generally recommended for health care workers)
- Anyone who wants protection

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B vaccine is the best protection against HBV.

Who should get vaccinated?

- All babies, beginning at birth, should get hepatitis B vaccine
- All children and adolescents who have not been vaccinated
- Persons of any age whose behavior puts them at high risk for HBV infection
- Persons whose jobs expose them to human blood

All pregnant women should be tested for HBV early in their pregnancy. Babies born to HBV positive mothers should receive vaccine along with hepatitis B immune globulin (called H-BIG) at birth. The vaccine series should be completed during the first 6 months of life.

There is **no** cure for HBV,
this is why **prevention is important.**

Hepatitis C

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!

- Don't ever shoot drugs. If you shoot drugs, stop and get into a treatment program. If you can't stop, never reuse or share syringes, water, or drug works, and get vaccinated against hepatitis A and hepatitis B
- Do not share toothbrushes, razors, or other personal care articles
- Health care workers should always follow routine barrier precautions and safely handle needles and other sharps
- Get vaccinated for HBV
- Consider the health risks if you are thinking about getting a tattoo or body piercing
- Use latex condoms correctly and every time
- The surest way to prevent the spread of any disease by sex is not to have sex at all

Vaccination Schedule

2 doses given 6 months apart

- Infants and children: 3 to 4 doses given over a 6 to 18 month period depending on vaccine type and schedule
- Adults: 3 doses given over a 6-month period

There is **no** vaccine to prevent hepatitis C



A MEMBER OF THE MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES SYSTEM

For more information call:

Hepatitis Hotline at 1-404-332-4555

Or visit online at:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis>

Minnesota Department of Health website: www.health.state.mn.us