



## Vaccination is the best way to prevent hepatitis A.

The hepatitis A vaccine is safe and effective. The vaccine series usually consists of 2 shots, given 6 months apart. Getting both shots provides the best protection against hepatitis A.

### Hepatitis A vaccination is recommended for:

- All children at age 1 year
- Travelers to countries where hepatitis A is common
- Family and caregivers of adoptees from countries where hepatitis A is common
- Men who have sexual encounters with other men
- People who use or inject drugs
- People with chronic or long-term liver disease, including hepatitis B or hepatitis C
- People with clotting factor disorders
- People with direct contact with others who have hepatitis A
- People experiencing homelessness

## You can prevent infection even after you have been exposed.

If you have been exposed to the hepatitis A virus in the last 2 weeks, talk to your doctor about getting vaccinated. A single shot of the hepatitis A vaccine can help prevent hepatitis A if given within 2 weeks of exposure. Depending upon your age and health, your doctor may recommend immune globulin in addition to the hepatitis A vaccine.

## Handwashing plays an important role in prevention.

Practicing good hand hygiene—including thoroughly washing hands with soap and warm water after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating food—plays an important role in preventing the spread of many illnesses, including hepatitis A.

## Symptoms

Not everyone with hepatitis A has symptoms. Adults are more likely to have symptoms than children. If symptoms develop, they usually appear 2 to 7 weeks after infection and can include:

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

Symptoms usually last less than 2 months, although some people can be ill for as long as 6 months.

## Diagnosis and treatment

A doctor can determine if you have hepatitis A by discussing your symptoms and taking a blood sample. To treat the symptoms of hepatitis A, doctors usually recommend rest, adequate nutrition, and fluids. Some people will need medical care in a hospital.

## International travel and hepatitis A

If you are planning to travel to countries where hepatitis A is common, talk to your doctor about getting vaccinated before you travel. Travelers to urban areas, resorts, and luxury hotels in countries where hepatitis A is common are still at risk. International travelers have been infected, even though they regularly washed their hands and were careful about what they drank and ate.

