



# Hepatitis A Virus

## (HAV)

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### What is Hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a contagious liver disease that results from infection with the Hepatitis A virus. Illness can be mild, lasting a few weeks, to a severe illness lasting several months.

### How is Hepatitis A spread?

Hepatitis A is usually spread by the fecal-oral route, from contact with objects, food, or drinks contaminated by feces or stool from an infected person. Hepatitis A can be spread when there is improper hand washing or food handling by an infected person.

### What are the symptoms of Hepatitis A?

Symptoms of Hepatitis A can include fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, gray-colored stool, dark urine, joint pain, and jaundice. Symptoms appear in adults more than children. They usually last less than 2 months, but can last as long as 6 months. It is important to note that some people infected with Hepatitis A may not show any symptoms, but can still spread the disease.

### How is Hepatitis A prevented?

There is a vaccine available to prevent Hepatitis A. It is a safe and effective vaccine, given in 2 doses, 6 months apart. The Hepatitis A vaccine is recommended for children over the age of 12 months. It is required for school attendance in certain grade levels. Frequent hand washing with soap and water, particularly after using the bathroom, changing a diaper, or before preparing or eating food, also helps prevent the spread of Hepatitis A.

### School Exclusion Policy:

Children with a confirmed diagnosis of Hepatitis A should be kept out of school or childcare until one week after the onset of the illness.

### Resources:

Center for Disease Control & Prevention- <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/HAV/index.htm>

Texas Department of State Health Services-

[http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/disease/hepatitis/hepatitis\\_a/](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/disease/hepatitis/hepatitis_a/)