



A Serious Disease

Hepatitis A, B, and C are contagious liver diseases that are spread in various ways, including sex. Each type of hepatitis spreads differently. They also affect health differently. Hepatitis can be serious — even deadly.

Hepatitis is an inflammation (irritation) of the liver caused by a virus (a tiny organism). The liver is necessary for life. It filters all the food that enters the body.

The amount of damage hepatitis does to the liver depends on how long the inflammation lasts.

Symptoms of Hepatitis

Many people infected with hepatitis have no symptoms. Even without symptoms, the virus may harm your health. Infected people can infect others whether or not they have symptoms.

Some symptoms are:

- Fatigue (tiredness).
- Fever.
- Loss of appetite.
- Nausea and stomach pain.
- Dark, brownish urine and/or light colored stool.
- Yellowed skin and eyes (jaundice).
- Joint pain.

Hepatitis A Basics

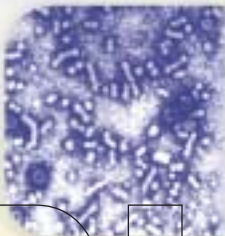
Hepatitis A is the most common type of hepatitis. Some people have no signs. Others are “out of action” for weeks or even months. The average infected person misses five weeks of work!



Virus that causes hepatitis A

Hepatitis B Basics

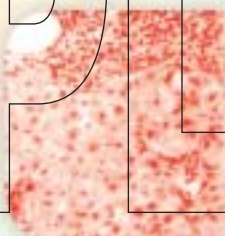
There are about 80,000 new hepatitis B infections each year in the U.S. Many infected people never have any symptoms. Other people with hepatitis B are unable to do normal activities for weeks.



Virus that causes hepatitis B

Hepatitis C Basics

The most dangerous type of hepatitis is hepatitis C. About 25,000 people become infected with hepatitis C each year in the U.S. and many of them become chronic carriers. Chronic carriers of hepatitis C can infect others, whether or not they know they have the disease. There is no vaccine or cure for hepatitis C.



Virus that causes hepatitis C



For More Information

Go to www.intheknowzone.com for an extension of this pamphlet.

Increase your knowledge using the information, statistics, images, and links.

Test your understanding with a quick quiz.



National STD Hotline:
(800) 227-8922

**Don't stay in
the dark.
Get In the Know!**

Hepatitis A, B, & C

a family of risks



in the know

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The Spread of Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is usually spread when food or objects containing infected feces (stool or bowel movement) are put in the mouth. Something, like a hand, may **look and smell clean**, but may still have some feces on it.

Hepatitis A can spread through sexual contact. Mouth contact with a part of the body that has feces on it can spread the disease.

Hepatitis A can also be passed through illegal drug use, whether injected, snorted, or taken by mouth.

People at increased risk of hepatitis A are:

- Housemates or sex partners of people sick with hepatitis A.
- Men who have sex with men.
- Drug users.
- People (especially children) who live where hepatitis A is common.

People with hepatitis A may be contagious for two weeks or more. Infected people can infect others even if they have no symptoms. Once the person is well, he or she cannot spread the disease. A person who has had hepatitis A cannot get it again.

Preventing and Treating Hepatitis A

There is a vaccine (shot) available for hepatitis A. The vaccine is recommended for people who are at high risk of the disease.

The Spread of Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B spreads through direct contact with body fluids (blood, semen, vaginal fluids) of an infected person.

The ways hepatitis B can be passed include:

- Vaginal, oral, or anal sex.
- Sharing IV drug needles.
- Sharing items used for sniffing drugs.
- Sharing razors, toothbrushes, or other items that carry tiny amounts of blood.
- From an infected woman to her baby during birth.
- Accidental injury of health care workers with infected needles or "sharps."
- Unclean body piercing, tattooing, or acupuncture.

People at increased risk of hepatitis B are:

- A person whose sex partner is infected.
- People with multiple sex partners.
- Men who have sex with men.
- Drug users.
- People who may contact blood on the job.
- Those who live in or travel to areas where hepatitis B is common.

Life with Hepatitis B

There is no cure for hepatitis B. Many people clear the infection on their own. Some people develop a "chronic" infection. These "carriers" may or may not have symptoms, but they can infect others for the rest of their lives.

Chronic carriers may develop cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver or liver cancer. About 5,000 people die each year of liver disease caused by hepatitis B.

Preventing and Treating Hepatitis B

A vaccine for hepatitis B is recommended for all children and for at-risk adults.

Avoiding risky behavior is important, too. That means staying away from illegal drugs and using latex condoms if sexually active. Abstinence is the best way to prevent hepatitis from sexual contact.



The Spread of Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C is spread when someone's infected body fluids enter someone else's body. It can be spread by IV drug use, snorting drugs, by infected women to babies during birth, through sex, through health care workplace accidents, or (rarely) through blood transfusions or medical procedures.

Life with Hepatitis C

There is no cure for hepatitis C. Chronic carriers have the disease for life and can infect others. Many hepatitis C carriers develop chronic liver disease. Approximately 10,000 people die each year from liver disease caused by hepatitis C.

Hepatitis C is life threatening. No vaccine is available, and there is no cure. Staying away from high-risk activities is the best way to keep from getting hepatitis C.

More Hepatitis C Facts

www.intheknowzone.com/hep/cfacts

Vaccination and Public Health

If you think that you have been exposed to hepatitis, get tested. You don't want to spread it to others. If you are not infected, get the hepatitis A or B vaccine. Talk to your doctor about being vaccinated.

In order to protect public health, people who have had any type of hepatitis cannot donate blood or organs.



get vaccinated

More Hepatitis A Facts

www.intheknowzone.com/hep/afacts

More Hepatitis B Facts

www.intheknowzone.com/hep/bfacts

More Information and Help

www.intheknowzone.com/hep/help