



Facts about Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is a fairly common liver infection caused by a virus. Symptoms may include stomach discomfort, fever, loss of appetite, nausea, tiredness, "feeling sick all over" and jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes).

In young children, the symptoms are often very mild or there are none at all. Symptoms generally get more severe in older children and adults, who can get the virus from younger children in their families who do not appear ill.

The diagnosis can be confirmed by a blood test. Although treatment or hospitalization is rarely necessary, people may be sick for several weeks. Most people make a full recovery without any long term effects.

This type of hepatitis is not associated with serious long-term consequences.

How is Hepatitis A spread?

The virus is passed in the feces or bowel movement of infected people from two weeks before symptoms begin until one week afterwards. The virus remains on unwashed hands, and can be spread between people quite easily. If the virus gets into the mouth of another person, it may infect them, and they could become ill two to six weeks later. It is usually spread by close contact such as sharing food or toys with someone who is infected with the virus or changing the diaper of an infected child even if there are no signs of illness. It is not spread by coughing or sneezing or by sharing common air space.

How can Hepatitis A be prevented?

The best prevention is to always wash your hands carefully with soap and water after

using the bathroom or changing a child and before preparing food or eating.

For people who have been exposed to the virus, Hepatitis A vaccine given within two weeks can reduce the risk of infection. A second dose of Hepatitis A vaccine is given 6 months later. The vaccine offers long term protection, for up to twenty years or more.

What is Hepatitis A Vaccine?

It is a vaccine that is very effective in protecting people against Hepatitis A. It is two shots given at least 6 months apart. The vaccine provides excellent protection against Hepatitis A in all age groups except children less than 6 months of age.

Hepatitis A vaccine can be used for control of Hepatitis A infections in childcare settings where people, particularly children, are in frequent close contact.

What are the possible side effects of the vaccine?

About half the people who receive the vaccine will have no side effects at all and most others will have a mild reaction. Mild reactions include soreness or swelling where the shot was given (occurs 20%-50% of the time). Other mild reactions are temporary fatigue, or low-grade fever (occurs in 10% of cases).

Note: Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is recommended if there is fever or pain following immunization. Acetylsalicylic acid (ASA or aspirin) is NOT to be given to children.

In very rare cases, a person may be allergic to some components of the vaccine. Signs of an allergic reaction can include difficulty

breathing, hoarseness or wheezing, hives, paleness, weakness, rapid heartbeat, or dizziness. If you do notice any reactions call your doctor immediately.

It is recommended that you stay in the clinic for at least 15 minutes after any type of immunization.

Who should not receive this vaccine?

The vaccine should not be given if someone has a moderate or severe acute illness. Hepatitis A vaccine should not be administered to individuals who have severe allergic reactions to formaldehyde, aluminum or neomycin.

**If you would like more information, please call your local Public Health Office
(Monday through Friday 8:30 am - 4:30 pm)**

Community Area	Address	Phone #
Assiniboine South	3 – 139 Tuxedo Avenue	940-2005
Downtown West	490 Hargrave Street	940-2420
Downtown East	425 Elgin	940 3160
Fort Garry	2 nd Fl – 2989 Pembina Hwy.	940-2015
Inkster	103 – 61 Tyndall Avenue	940-2020
Point Douglas	601 Aikins Street	940-2025
River East	1400 Henderson Hwy.	940-2030
River Heights	385 River Avenue	940-2000
Seven Oaks	2 nd Fl – 1021 Court Avenue	940-2050
St. Boniface	204 – 614 Des Meurons	940-2035
St. James-Assiniboia	2 nd Fl – 2015 Portage Avenue	940-2040
St. Vital (Youville Center)	6 – 845 Dakota Street	940-2045
Transcona	1615 Regent	940-2055

After hours call Health Links at 788-8200