What is hepatitis A?
Hepatitis (hep-ah-ty-tis) A is a liver disease. It is caused by infection with the hepatitis A virus.

Who can get hepatitis A?
Anyone can get hepatitis A. Some people who are at greater risk of getting hepatitis A include:

- People who live with someone who has hepatitis A
- People who work in child care settings
- Children who go to child care
- Men who have sex with men
- People who travel to countries where hepatitis A is common
- People who use street-drugs (injected or non-injected)
- People who are homeless and do not have access to hygienic measures, such as handwashing

People who have recovered from hepatitis A cannot become infected again. They become immune to the virus.

How is hepatitis A spread?
Hepatitis A virus is found in the stool of infected people. People become infected with hepatitis A by swallowing the virus. This can happen when infected people do not wash their hands properly after using the bathroom and then touch food that is eaten by someone else.

What are the symptoms of hepatitis A?
People infected with hepatitis A may have no symptoms, or they may have a range of symptoms including:

- Fever
- Tiredness
- Poor appetite
- Dark yellow urine
- Stomach pain
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Yellow skin or eyes (jaundice)

How is hepatitis A diagnosed?
Hepatitis A is diagnosed by a blood test that looks for hepatitis A antibodies.

What is the treatment for hepatitis A?
Most people fully recover on their own within a few weeks. No specific medications, including antibiotics, are used to treat hepatitis A.
Can people with hepatitis A pass the illness to others?
An infected person can spread hepatitis A to others as long as the hepatitis A virus is present in his/her stool. This usually begins about 1 to 2 weeks before the onset of jaundice or peak of symptoms if there is no jaundice. There is no chronic (long-term) infection with hepatitis A. People do not become carriers of the hepatitis A virus.

Is there a vaccine for hepatitis A?
Yes, there is a vaccine that will prevent someone from getting sick with hepatitis A.

What should I do if I think I have been exposed to hepatitis A?
If you think you have been exposed to hepatitis A, see a health care provider right away. Your health care provider may recommend that you receive an injection of hepatitis A vaccine and/or immune globulin. These injections should be given within two weeks of being exposed to the hepatitis A virus. Immune globulin only provides protection for a short-time, it does not provide long-term protection like the hepatitis A vaccine.

Can hepatitis A turn into hepatitis B or C?
No, hepatitis A is caused by a different virus from the viruses that cause hepatitis B or C. Also, hepatitis A virus does not turn into the other hepatitis viruses.

How can hepatitis A be prevented?
- **Always wash hands thoroughly** with soap and water after using the toilet, changing a diaper or helping a child to use the toilet, before preparing food and beverages, and before eating
- Avoid drinking untreated water
- Avoid eating raw or undercooked shellfish (shellfish, such as clams and oysters, may be contaminated if they have been harvested from waters contaminated by sewage containing hepatitis A virus)
- Get vaccinated against hepatitis A
- Consult your health care provider if you have been exposed to hepatitis A
- Anyone with diarrhea should not prepare food for others

Where can I get more information on hepatitis A?
- Your health care provider
- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention [http://www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- California Department of Public Health [https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/Hepatitis-A.aspx](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/Hepatitis-A.aspx)

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