



# QUICK FACTS ABOUT....

## *Hepatitis A*

### **What is Hepatitis A?**

Hepatitis A is a liver disease caused by the Hepatitis A virus which is found in the stool (bowel movement) of an infected person. It rarely causes long-term damage or death.

### **How is it spread?**

Hepatitis A is spread from person-to-person by hands that have not been washed after going to the bathroom or by touching items such as diapers or linens soiled by stool.

It is also spread by contaminated water or ice and by eating uncooked foods that may have become contaminated during handling.

### **What are the symptoms?**

- Tiredness
- Stomach pain
- Fever
- Dark urine
- Loss of appetite
- Yellowing of skin & eyeballs (jaundice)
- Nausea

People are most contagious from about one week before these symptoms begin until two weeks after. Most people start to have symptoms about one month after exposure.

Some people have no symptoms, but still spread the virus.

### **Who is at risk for hepatitis A?**

- People who live with or have sex with an infected person.
- Children and staff of child care centers where a child or employee has hepatitis A.
- Residents and staff of centers for disabled children when a child or employee has hepatitis A.
- Travelers to countries where hepatitis A is common and where there is little clean water or proper sewage disposal.

### **Is there a cure?**

No. There is no medicine for hepatitis A once you have it. Immune globulin can be taken within two weeks after exposure to prevent or lessen symptoms.

### **How can hepatitis A be prevented?**

- Always wash hands after using the bathroom.
- Always wash hands after cleaning the toilet.
- Always wash hands after changing diapers.
- Always wash hands after handling soiled towels or linens.
- Always wash hands before fixing food or eating.
- If exposed to hepatitis A, ask doctor about immune globulin.
- If traveling to areas where hepatitis A is common:
  - get immune globulin or vaccination before travel;
  - drink bottled beverages; and
  - do not eat uncooked fruits or vegetables, unless you peel them yourself.

#### *References:*

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)  
[Indiana State Department of Health](#)