

live well, work well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home, and life—brought to you by the insurance and healthcare specialists at Cook, Hall & Hyde, Inc..

Hepatitis Overview

Comparing Types A, B, and C

All forms of the hepatitis virus cause inflammation of the liver that affects its ability to function. This is significant because your liver performs hundreds of tasks that are essential to your health and life, such as fighting off infections, stopping bleeding, removing drugs and other poisons from the blood, and storing energy that will be used when later needed.

Hepatitis A

Once the virus enters your body, it incubates for about 15 to 30 days. After the incubation stage, you will start to develop symptoms which typically last about 2 weeks. After that, the liver will be completely healed and more than 99 percent of patients fully recover.

Signs & Symptoms

- Jaundice
- Fatigue
- Abdominal pain
- Loss of appetite

- Nausea
- Diarrhea
- Fever

Cause

The Hepatitis A virus (HAV).

Long-Term Effects

There are no long-term effects, and once you've had HAV you cannot get it again. About 15 percent of people infected will have prolonged or relapsing symptoms over a 6- to 9-month period.

How is HAV Transmitted?

HAV is found in the stool (feces) of someone with Hepatitis A. It is transmitted by eating or drinking something that has been contaminated by an infected person.

Who is at Risk?

- Those living with infected persons
- Anyone traveling to countries where HAV is common
- Homosexual men
- Injecting and non-injecting drug users

Prevention

The Hepatitis A vaccine is your best protection, but good hygiene is also important.

Always wash your hands after using the bathroom, changing a diaper, and before preparing and eating food.

Hepatitis B

After the virus is in your body, you likely won't see symptoms until 45 to 180 days later. Most people start to feel better after 2 to 3 weeks and recover completely after 4 to 8 weeks. Only about 5 to 10 percent have long-lasting symptoms.

Signs & Symptoms

- Jaundice
- Fatigue
- Abdominal pain
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Joint pain



Cause

The Hepatitis B virus (HBV).

Long-Term Effects

Chronic infection occurs in 90 percent of infants infected at birth, in 30 percent of children infected at ages 1 to 5, and in 6 percent infected after age 5. In addition, HBV can also cause chronic liver disease, which about 15 to 20 percent die from.

How is HBV Transmitted?

It is spread when blood or body fluids from an infected person enter the body of a person who is not immune. For example, it can be spread through unprotected sex, sharing drug needles, or from an infected mother to her baby during birth.

Who is at Risk?

- Persons with multiple sex partners
- Persons with a sexually transmitted disease
- Homosexual men
- Injection drug users
- Persons living with or in a sexual relationship with someone infected
- Infants born to infected mothers
- Health care and public safety workers
- Hemodialysis patients

Prevention

The Hepatitis B vaccine is your best protection, but other preventive methods include

having your blood tested if you are pregnant, avoiding unprotected sex, and not sharing personal care items such as a razor or toothbrush.

Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C is the most common blood-borne infection in the United States. After it enters the body, it starts the early (acute) stage, which has mild to no symptoms. After being exposed to the virus for about six months, the virus goes to the next stage and becomes long-term (chronic). About 80 percent infected with HCV will develop a chronic infection, which varies from mild to severe liver damage. It can last for years and may possibly never go away.

Signs & Symptoms

- Jaundice
- Fatigue
- Dark urine
- Abdominal pain
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea

Cause

The Hepatitis C virus (HCV).

Long-Term Effects

Of those infected with HCV, chronic infection affects 75 to 85 percent, chronic liver disease affects 70 percent, and death occurs less than 3 percent of the time. However, HCV is the leading indicator for liver transplant.

How is HCV Transmitted?

It is spread when blood or body fluids of an infected person enter the body of someone not infected. It can also be transmitted through sharing needles or from an infected mother to her child during delivery.

Who is at Risk?

- Injecting drug users
- Recipients of clotting factors made before 1987
- Hemodialysis patients
- Recipients of blood and/or solid organs before 1992
- People with undiagnosed liver problems
- Infants born to infected mothers
- Health care and public safety workers
- Those having unprotected sex with multiple partners

Prevention

There is not a vaccine for HCV, so you should do all you can to prevent it. Do not use drug needles, do not share personal care items that could have blood on them, do not have unprotected sex, and if you are planning on getting a tattoo, make sure the tools are cleaned and sanitized properly.

For more information, please contact:
Centers for Disease Control (CDC) National Immunization Hotline, 1-800-232-2522;
www.cdc.gov/vaccines

Did you know...?

It is estimated that about 1.8% of the population (about 4 million people in the U.S.) have evidence of current or past infection with Hepatitis C. It is the leading cause of liver transplants and causes about 9,000 deaths each year in the United States.

Source: *Public Health – Seattle & King County* (www.metrokc.gov)