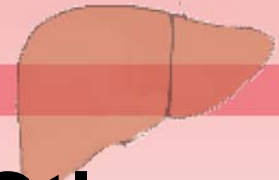


Hepatitis



Protecting Yourself and Others

Hepatitis is a liver infection. There are several types of hepatitis.

- **Hepatitis A** is caused by the hepatitis A virus. It is spread by eating foods or drinking water that has been in contact with an infected person's stool. It is the most common type of hepatitis and does not cause long-term liver problems.
- **Hepatitis B** is caused by the hepatitis B virus. It is spread through contact with the blood and body fluids of an infected person. It can either last for a short time or can be a long-term infection. Over time, it can damage your liver. As long as you have the virus, you can spread it to others.
- **Hepatitis C** is caused by the hepatitis C virus. It is spread by contact with an infected person's blood. Over time it can lead to permanent liver damage as well as cirrhosis, liver cancer, and liver failure. Most people who are infected with the virus go on to develop long-term, or chronic, hepatitis C.

Symptoms

If you have symptoms, you may just feel like you have the flu.

Early Symptoms

- not feeling hungry
- feeling tired
- mild fever
- muscle or joint aches and pains
- nausea and vomiting
- belly pain

Later Symptoms

- diarrhea or constipation
- skin rash.
- yellowish eyes and skin (jaundice)

The hepatitis virus can be passed to other people. If you have the virus you can give it to other people 2 to 3 weeks before you feel sick. After you start feeling sick, you can still pass the virus to someone else for the next 2 to 3 weeks.

Prevent the Spread

If you have hepatitis you should:

- Wash your hands after you go to the bathroom.
- Tell others to wear gloves if they need to touch any of your body fluids.
- Do not wash your clothes and sheets with other people's laundry. Use very hot water and a strong soap.
- Disinfect your bathroom. Wear gloves when you clean.
- Use a different bathroom from the rest of your family.
- Use a condom when you have sex.
- Do not share needles, razors, or toothbrushes with anyone.
- Talk to your doctor about those who live with you or provide care for you. They can get shots to keep from getting sick.