

HEPATITIS A

What is Hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is virus that causes inflammation of the liver. It is different from Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C as it is passed on and treated differently.

How is it transmitted/passed on?

Hepatitis A is found in faeces (poo) and is passed on when the virus comes into contact with someone's mouth or is swallowed.

This can happen through:

- Oral or anal sex (rimming)
- Consuming contaminated food or water
- Touching nappies, towels or linen with infected faeces on them
- Sharing sex toys

The infected faeces can be too small to see!

How would I know if I had Hepatitis A?

You can have flu-like symptoms like fever, nausea and abdominal (tummy) pains. You may notice your urine is darker and your poo is pale coloured and a yellowing of the eyes and skin (jaundice). Symptoms usually take an average of 28 days to appear with symptoms lasting up to 4 weeks.

How to test for Hepatitis A?

You will need to have a blood sample taken to see if you have Hepatitis A or have had it in the past.

How is Hepatitis A treated?

There is no specific treatment for Hepatitis A other than management of your symptoms.

Telling partners

Any sexual partners from 50 days before you developed symptoms will need to be tested so they don't pass it on to you or someone else.

You can contact your sexual partners yourself either directly or by sending an anonymous SMS or email using www.bettertoknow.org.au

Alternatively, your doctor, nurse or Aboriginal Health Practitioner can contact your sexual partners anonymously for you to let them know they should be tested.

How can I prevent Hepatitis A?

Always wash your hands after going to the toilet and before touching or preparing food. Hepatitis A can be prevented by the correct use of dams with lube when rimming.

If you are sexually active, it's good to get a STI check-up when:

- You have your health check (715) – just ask!
- Every 6 to 12 months (if you are under 30)
- When you change sexual partners
- If you have any pain or changes with your genitals or body

Be prepared! Remember to always carry condoms (and lube) with you so you have them when you need them. Make sure you regularly check the expiry dates and make sure they are in good condition before you use them.

Anything else I should know?

Hepatitis A is not a long-term illness and is rarely fatal unless you have other underlying medical conditions that weaken your immune system.

You can get a vaccine to prevent Hepatitis A that consists of two injections given 6 months apart. Check with your Aboriginal Medical Service, doctor or sexual health clinic!

