

# HEPATITIS A FACT SHEET:

## ■ WHAT IS HEPATITIS A?

Hepatitis A is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus. It can last a few weeks to several months, but it goes away on its own in almost all cases. Hepatitis A does not lead to long-term liver problems. In the past year, there were outbreaks of hepatitis A occurring in neighboring counties, primarily affecting individuals who are experiencing homelessness, illicit drug users, or men who have sex with men.

## ■ WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF HEPATITIS A?

Hepatitis A does not always cause symptoms. If symptoms occur, they can develop 15-50 days after being infected. The most common symptoms of hepatitis A are:

- Diarrhea
- Stomach pain
- Dark color urine
- Fever (up to 102 degrees)
- Jaundice (Yellowing of the skin)
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Loss of appetite
- Muscle pain

## ■ HOW IS HEPATITIS A SPREAD?

Hepatitis A is typically spread through the fecal-oral route. This is when an uninfected person ingests food or water that has been contaminated with even a small amount of feces. This can occur when:

- Touching food or objects contaminated with hepatitis A
- Having sex with someone infected with hepatitis A

## ■ HOW IS HEPATITIS A TREATED?

Hepatitis A goes away on its own in most cases. You can help yourself get better faster by drinking lots of water, eating a healthy mix of foods, and avoiding alcohol. While you have hepatitis A, cut back on daily activities until all your energy returns. Those who have had hepatitis A before can never get sick from it again.

## ■ HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF FROM HEPATITIS A?

- Hepatitis A shots (vaccinations) 6 months apart
- Wash hands with soap and clean water often, especially at these times:
  - Before eating or preparing food
  - After using the bathroom or changing diapers
- Avoid sexual practices that might result in oral exposure to stool (e.g.: oral-anal contact).
- Use your own towels, toothbrushes, and eating utensils
- Don't share food, drinks, or smoking devices with other people

## ■ WHO SHOULD GET VACCINATED FOR HEPATITIS A?

- All children at 1 year of age
- Travelers to countries where hepatitis A is common
- Family and caregivers of adoptees from countries where hepatitis A is common
- Men who have sex with men
- Recreational drug users
- Persons experiencing homelessness
- People with chronic liver disease or hepatitis B or C
- People with clotting-factor disorders
- People who have potential exposure to hepatitis A in an outbreak situation

## ■ WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT HEPATITIS A?

California Department of Public Health:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/Hepatitis-A.aspx>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

<http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav/>

For additional information, please contact (562) 570-7907.