



What is it?

- A viral disease that attacks the liver.
- Most common among daycare and school aged children, younger adults and men who have sex with men.
- Convalescence is prolonged but complete recovery without complications is the general rule.

What are the symptoms?

- Symptoms develop suddenly and usually last 1 —2 weeks
- Fever
- Lack of appetite
- Nausea
- Abdominal discomfort
- Jaundice (yellow skin/eyes)
- Severity of symptoms increases with age
- Many have no symptoms

How quickly do symptoms develop?

- Within 15 to 50 days after coming in contact with the virus. This is referred to as the incubation period.

How is it spread?

- The Hepatitis A virus is excreted in the stool of infected persons.
- Spread from person to person by food or water contaminated with infected stool (e.g. food handlers who don't wash their hands)
- From raw or undercooked shellfish harvested from polluted water.
- From contaminated fruits and vegetables from underdeveloped countries.
- By sexual contact with an infected person.
- By sharing needles and drug-related equipment.

How long is it contagious?

- During the later half of the incubation period and continuing for about a week after onset of jaundice.
- Infected persons should not attend daycare or school during this time.

How is it treated?

- There is no treatment for the infected person.
- Household and sexual contacts of an infected person may be advised to have an injection of Hepatitis A vaccine or immune globulin.

What can you do?

- Infected persons should avoid preparing or handling food for others.
- Wash your hands after going to the toilet, changing a diaper and before preparing food or eating.
- Dispose of diapers in a sanitary manner.
- Drink from a safe water supply.
- Become immunized with hepatitis A vaccine.

If you are traveling outside Canada or U.S.A. check with the Algoma Public Health regarding recommended vaccines and precautions.

Whom should I talk to if I have any questions?

Communicable Disease Control, Algoma Public Health at (705) 942-4646, www.algomapublichealth.com, or your health care provider.