

Hepatitis A, B, and C

The word “hepatitis” means swelling of the liver. Any person can get hepatitis.

The most widespread types are hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C.

The liver is an organ that does many important things. It removes waste from your blood, fights infection, helps digest food, stores nutrients and vitamins, and stores energy.

Hepatitis A

You can get hepatitis A from:

- eating food made by an infected person who didn’t wash his or her hands after using the bathroom
- drinking untreated water or eating food washed in untreated water
- placing a finger or object in your mouth that came into contact with an infected person’s poop
- having sex with an infected person.

What are the symptoms? Young children may have none. Adults often have these:

- light stools
- dark pee
- feeling sleepy
- fever
- nausea
- vomiting
- loss of appetite
- jaundice (yellowish eyes and skin)

Hepatitis A often gets better in a few weeks without treatment. Get lots of rest and don’t drink alcohol.



You can avoid getting hepatitis A by getting the hepatitis A vaccine. You can also protect yourself and others from hepatitis A in these ways:

- Always wash your hands with warm, soapy water after using the toilet or changing diapers and before fixing food or eating.
- Use bottled water for drinking, making ice cubes, and washing fruits and vegetables when you are in a developing country.

For more information call Customer Service at **(415) 615-4555**.

Or visit **www.healthysanfrancisco.org**

Hepatitis B

You can get hepatitis B through contact with an infected person's blood, semen, or other body fluid. You can get hepatitis B from these ways:

- being born to a mother with hepatitis B
- having sex with an infected person
- being tattooed or pierced with unsterilized tools that were used on an infected person
- getting an accidental needle stick with a needle that was used on an infected person
- using an infected person's razor or toothbrush
- sharing drug needles with an infected person.

Hepatitis B usually has no symptoms. When people do have symptoms, they are like those of hepatitis A, plus these: a longer than normal time for bleeding to stop, swollen stomach or ankles, and easy bruising.

Some people who get hepatitis B find that their body can't get rid of it. This is called "chronic" hepatitis B. Children, mainly infants, are more likely to get chronic hepatitis B, which often has no symptoms until signs of liver damage appear. Without treatment, chronic hepatitis B can cause bad liver problems. But, hepatitis B usually is not treated unless it becomes chronic.

You can avoid getting hepatitis B by getting the hepatitis B vaccine. You can also avoid getting hepatitis B in these ways:

- use a barrier (like a condom) during sex
- do not share drug needles
- wear gloves if you have to touch another person's blood
- do not borrow another person's toothbrush, razor, or anything else that could have blood on it
- make sure any tattoos or body piercings you get are done with sterile tools.

Hepatitis C

You can get hepatitis C through the same ways as with hepatitis B.

There is no vaccine for hepatitis C. Most people have no symptoms until the virus causes liver damage, which can take 10 or more years. Other people have symptoms like those of hepatitis A and B. While some people clear the virus from their bodies in a few months, most hepatitis C infections become chronic. Most people with chronic hepatitis C do not progress to severe liver disease. Some people benefit from drugs that slow or stop liver damage. Ask your provider if you are someone who would benefit from treatment. You can protect yourself and others from hepatitis C by the same practices as for hepatitis A and B.

You cannot get hepatitis from someone sneezing or coughing on you, sitting next to a person who has hepatitis, or hugging an infected person.

Adapted from:

www.digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/hepa_ez/

www.digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/hepb_ez/

www.digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/hepc_ez/

www.ethnomed.org/patient-education/hepatitis/GRID_ABC.pdf

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