

# Hepatitis A Infection



## Clinical Description:

Hepatitis A is a disease of the liver resulting from infection with the hepatitis A virus. Symptoms can include diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, stomach cramps, fever, dark urine, pale or clay-colored stool, loss of appetite, and jaundice. Few cases of children less than 6 years will have jaundice. There is no long-term carrier state with hepatitis A infection. Individuals may be asymptomatic but still infectious.

## Incubation Period:

Symptoms usually occur suddenly and begin 28 - 30 days, range of 15 - 50 days, after exposure. Symptoms typically last less than two months, although 10-15% of cases have symptoms lasting up to 6 months

## Mode of Transmission:

Hepatitis A is transmitted by the fecal-oral route.

## Period of Communicability:

A person can spread hepatitis A 14 days before and 7 days after the onset of jaundice, or if jaundice does not occur, 7 days before and 14 days after the onset of symptoms.

## Exclusion/Reporting:

Symptomatic persons diagnosed with hepatitis A or symptomatic persons linked by person, place, or time to a case are excluded from attending school:

- 14 days before or 7 days after onset of jaundice
- 7 days before and 14 days after symptom onset (if no jaundice)
- Disease prevention education is provided by the local health department

For more information on laws and rules regarding Hepatitis A see the ISDH Communicable Disease Reporting Rule (410 IAC 1-2.3-72) at: [http://www.in.gov/isdh/files/comm\\_dis\\_rule\(1\).pdf](http://www.in.gov/isdh/files/comm_dis_rule(1).pdf).

## Prevention/Care:

Post-exposure prophylaxis is recommended for household and sexual contacts and contacts exposed to food prepared by the case within two weeks of exposure. When the vaccination schedule is properly followed, the hepatitis A vaccine is nearly 100% effective. Encourage frequent hand washing, particularly after using the restroom, assisting someone with diarrhea and/or vomiting, after contact with animals, after swimming, and before and after food preparation. Please refer to the ISDH Handwashing Campaign at <http://www.in.gov/isdh/24036.htm>.

## Outbreaks:

According to the ISDH Communicable Disease Reporting Rule (410 IAC 1-2.3) the definition of an outbreak means cases of disease occurring in a community, region, or particular population at a rate in excess of that which is normally expected. A hepatitis A outbreak is two or more cases of a similar illness shown by an investigation to have resulted from a common exposure, such as ingestion of a common food. If an outbreak is suspected and/or documented, contact your local health department. For additional information and recommendations regarding

the preparation for, and the management of an outbreak situation in a school setting, see Appendix A, “Managing an Infectious Disease Outbreak In a School Setting.”

**Other Resources:**

Indiana State Department of Health Quick Facts Page (found on disease/condition page):

<http://bit.ly/12JLfD>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

<http://www.cdc.gov/Hepatitis/ChooseA.htm>