



HEPATITIS A

What is Hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a liver disease caused by the Hepatitis A virus (HAV). Hepatitis A can affect anyone. In the United States, Hepatitis A occurs in situations ranging from isolated cases to widespread epidemics.

What are the symptoms of Hepatitis A?

Onset of Hepatitis A occurs quickly, with fever, loss of appetite, weight loss, nausea and abdominal discomfort; some individuals may experience diarrhea. Jaundice (i.e., yellowing of the skin and eyes), dark urine and clay-colored stool (feces) may follow a few days later. Infections range from having no symptoms (common in young children) to disabling illness that may last several months. In general, symptom severity increases with increasing age.

How soon do symptoms appear after infection occurs?

Symptoms usually appear 15 to 50 days after exposure to Hepatitis A.

How long is Hepatitis A contagious?

Individuals are most contagious from 1-2 weeks before their symptoms begin to about 1 week after.

How is Hepatitis A spread?

HAV is found in the stool of persons with Hepatitis A. HAV is usually spread from person to person by putting something in the mouth (even though it might look clean) that has been contaminated with the stool of a person with Hepatitis A.

For more information,

For information on the Sedgwick County Health Department call 660-7300. Or visit the Sedgwick County website at www.sedgwickcounty.org.

How is Hepatitis A treated?

Hepatitis A usually goes away on its own. Currently, there is no specific treatment against Hepatitis A, only supportive care.

How can you prevent Hepatitis A?

Vaccination with the full, two-dose series of Hepatitis A vaccine is the best way to prevent HAV infection. Short-term protection against Hepatitis A is available from immune globulin. It can be given before and within 2 weeks of coming in contact with HAV. The best way to protect yourself is to always wash your hands with soap and water after using the bathroom, changing a diaper, and before preparing and eating food.



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