

HEPATITIS A

Hepatitis A is a virus that causes inflammation of the liver.

Symptoms

Some adults have no symptoms when they get Hepatitis A. If symptoms are present they may include jaundice (eyes and skin going yellow), loss of appetite and vomiting. Symptoms go away in a few weeks or months and there is no ongoing damage to the liver. Once a person has had Hepatitis A, they have lifetime immunity.

Transmission

Hepatitis A occurs when the faeces of an infected person is transferred to the mouth of another person. A person can pass on Hepatitis A in the 2 weeks before they develop symptoms until one week after they develop jaundice.

Transmission occurs when:

- a person eats or drinks contaminated food or water;
- sexual practices involve contact of the mouth with the anal area of an infected person; and
- hands are not washed properly after contact with faeces.

Diagnosis

Hepatitis A is diagnosed by blood testing. Tests can tell if this is a new infection or if the person has been exposed to Hepatitis A in the past and the infection is no longer present.

Treatment

Once someone has Hepatitis A there is no treatment available. Community and sexual contacts can be given preventive vaccination and an immunoglobulin injection. This will stop them getting Hepatitis A.

Vaccination is available and is recommended for people travelling overseas, food handlers, people who have chronic liver disease or other forms of viral hepatitis, plumbers, child care staff and men who have sex with men.

Partners

Sexual partners are at risk if their hands or mouth come into contact with the anal area or faeces of an infected person. Hepatitis A transmission can occur when hands are not washed after coming into contact with condoms used for anal intercourse.

Using a dam for contact during sexual activity can help to prevent transmission of Hepatitis A.

Complications

Hepatitis A does not cause ongoing liver problems. Sometimes the acute infection can be serious, usually when there is another cause of liver damage.

How to avoid getting Hepatitis A

Vaccination

Vaccination against Hepatitis A is available from general practitioners, travel clinics and the Sexual Health Service.

Wash hands carefully:

- before preparing food;
- between handling raw and ready to eat foods;
- before eating;
- after going to the toilet or changing nappies;
- after anal contact during sexual activity; and
- following contact with condoms, dams or sex toys use in anal intercourse.

Boil water from untreated sources for drinking

Careful household cleaning, especially of bathrooms and toilets.

Sexual Health Service Tasmania is staffed Monday to Friday from 8.30 am until 5.00 pm. Clinic times vary from site to site so please contact your local office for details (see contact details on the back of this pamphlet).

**Sexual Health Service
Clinical Services**

HOBART

60 Collins Street
Hobart 7000
Ph: (03) 6233 3557

LAUNCESTON

42 Canning Street
Launceston 7250
Ph: (03) 6336 2216

DEVONPORT

23 Steele Street
Devonport 7310
Ph: (03) 6421 7759

BURNIE

11 Jones Street
BURNIE 7320
Ph: (03) 6434 6315

**SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICE
A joint Australian and State
Government Program**

The Royal Hobart Hospital is Tasmania's largest hospital and provides a number of state-wide services including cardiothoracic surgery, neurosurgery, burns management, hyperbaric and diving medicine, neonatal intensive care and high-risk obstetrics. It is the major teaching and research hospital for the State and works closely with the University of Tasmania.

Many students in the health care professions are taught within the Hospital, and gaining skills in examining and interviewing patients is an important part of their education and training. We ask for your co-operation and encourage you to participate in our teaching and research activities. Your permission is required for participation.

The Royal Hobart Hospital encourages feedback from patients, relatives and visitors. This feedback helps staff to better understand the needs of patients and provide the best possible patient care.



**The Royal Hobart Hospital
is a smoke-free site**

Date: Feb 07

Review Date: Feb 08

**Information
Pamphlet**

Sexual
Health
SERVICE

Hepatitis A