

# SUMMER 2017: Hepatitis A outbreak

## Hepatitis A Summary and Frequently Asked Questions

Updated 06/26/2017

### Summary of Santa Cruz Hepatitis A Outbreak, 2017

The Public Health Division in the County of Santa Cruz has been investigating an increased number of Hepatitis A cases. Since April 2017, the County has 20 confirmed cases. The County usually has 1-2 confirmed cases per year. The investigation is ongoing. It has been challenging because of the long incubation period of the disease (15 to 50 days) and the difficulty experienced to contact many individuals sickened with the illness who are homeless and/or illicit drug users.

Vaccination efforts are being implemented in targeted locations by County staff and in collaboration with health care partners. Contact Public Health Division's Communicable Disease Unit at (831) 454-4114 or [www.SantaCruzHealth.org/HepA](http://www.SantaCruzHealth.org/HepA) for information on vaccination locations.

For weekly updates on total cases, deaths, hospitalizations, additional educational resources, and the latest public communications (e.g., press releases and health alerts), please go to the County's Hepatitis A webpage at [www.SantaCruzHealth.org/HepA](http://www.SantaCruzHealth.org/HepA).

### What is Hepatitis A?

**Hepatitis A** is a highly contagious liver infection caused by the Hepatitis A virus (HAV). It can cause liver disease, which may last a few weeks and sometimes progress to a serious illness lasting months. In some cases, people can die, but in most cases the infection is self-limiting.

### How Is It Spread?

The Hepatitis A virus is spread primarily by the fecal-oral route. This is when an uninfected person ingests food or water that has been contaminated with even a tiny or microscopic amount of the feces from an infected person.

This can occur when:

- Touching objects or eating food that someone with HAV infection handled, or
- Having sex with someone who has a HAV infection (not limited to anal-oral contact).

### What Are the Symptoms?

HAV does not always cause symptoms. Adults are more likely to have symptoms than children and can develop symptoms 15 to 50 days after being infected.

Symptoms include fever, fatigue, nausea, loss of appetite, yellowing of the eyes (jaundice), stomach pain, vomiting, dark urine, pale stools, and diarrhea. HAV can cause liver failure and even death – this is rare and is more likely to occur in persons 50 or older and individuals with other forms of liver disease (Hepatitis B or C).



# SUMMER 2017: Hepatitis A outbreak

HAV can be spread up to two weeks before and one week after noticing symptoms. It can also be spread by individuals who are infected, but do not have symptoms.

## How Can HAV Be Prevented?

- **The best way to prevent Hepatitis A is with the safe and effective Hepatitis A vaccine.** Get two shots of the HAV vaccine, six months apart.
- Don't have sex with someone who has HAV infection.
- Use your own towels, toothbrushes, and eating utensils.
- Don't share food, drinks, or smokes with other people.
- Wash hands after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and before preparing food.

## Where can I get vaccinated?

Please contact your local healthcare provider to request the HAV vaccine.

Click [here](#) for a list of Immunization Clinics in Santa Cruz County.

## Is the Hepatitis A Vaccine Safe and Effective?

- Yes, the vaccine is safe and highly effective in preventing Hepatitis A virus infection. You will be protected approximately 2 to 4 weeks after the first injection and longer-term defense is gained with the second injection. If you do not remember whether you were vaccinated, repeating the vaccination series is not harmful.

Check out these vaccine information statements for more information.

- [Hepatitis A Vaccine Information Statement](#)
- [Hepatitis A Vaccine Information Statement \(Spanish\)](#)

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), before the Hepatitis A vaccine became available in 1995, more than 25,000 people developed Hepatitis A each year in the U.S. In 2014, there were about 2,500 cases reported.

## Who Is At Increased Risk for Getting HAV Infection?

- Travelers to countries with high or medium rates of HAV.
- Men who have sex with men.
- Users of injection and non-injection illegal drugs.
- Persons with clotting factor disorders.
- During this outbreak, individuals with ongoing, close contact with homeless and illicit drug using individuals in Santa Cruz County may also be at increased risk.

## I routinely work with homeless and/or illicit drug using individuals and am NOT a health care worker. What precautions should I take?

- Most employees have a low risk of contracting Hepatitis A, if they comply with hand-washing and other hygiene requirements associated with their jobs.
- The best way to protect yourself is to continue to always use standard precautions AND get vaccinated.



# SUMMER 2017: Hepatitis A outbreak

- Under usual (non-outbreak) circumstances, occupational exposure does not warrant a routine recommendation to provide HAV vaccination. However, given the current outbreak, the County Public Health Officer recommends HAV vaccination for individuals with ongoing, close contact with homeless and illicit drug using individuals in Santa Cruz County. This includes persons working in public safety, homeless shelters, and homeless and behavioral service provider agencies (not including health care personnel).

## **I routinely work with homeless and/or illicit drug using individuals and am a health care worker. What precautions should I take?**

- Staff in healthcare environments would be expected to be protected by utilizing standard precautions; however staff should also consider HAV vaccination for long-term protection.
- CDC recommends that everyone 12 months of age and older should be vaccinated for Hepatitis A.
- Please discuss with your primary care clinician and/or occupational health if you are unsure.

## **What can local businesses do to prevent the further spread of Hepatitis A?**

- Remind employees of the importance of hand-washing with soap and warm water after using the bathroom, and before preparing, serving, or eating food.
- Maintain routine and consistent cleaning of bathrooms using a chlorine-based disinfectant (bleach) with a ratio of  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of bleach to one gallon of water. Include bathrooms that are for employees only and those that are open to the public.
- For employees in physical contact with others, especially those at risk for Hepatitis A, wear disposable gloves and wash hands after each encounter.
- Coordinate with your occupational health provider to determine if Hepatitis A vaccine should be offered to employees.

## **What If I Need Additional Assistance?**

If additional assistance is needed, please contact your healthcare provider, occupational health provider, or call the following:

- California AIDS, STD and Hepatitis Hotline—800-367-AIDS (2437) (24 hours/day, 7 days/week)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Information Hotline—800-CDC-INFO (232-4636) (24 hours/day, 7 days/week)

# SUMMER 2017: Hepatitis A outbreak

## There's a growing hepatitis A outbreak in Santa Cruz.

Each year in Santa Cruz County, one or two people get sick with hepatitis A. Right now, there are multiple people getting sick with hepatitis A every day. This outbreak is growing fast.

8 out of every 10 people who got sick, have had to stay in the hospital. In rare cases people die.

## The people you work with may be vulnerable.

This outbreak is affecting people who share any of these characteristics:

- homelessness
- dense living conditions
- and/or illicit drug use

## Don't become an outbreak site.

### 1. If your site serves food, remind food handlers that:

It is especially important to wash hands with soap and warm water after using the bathroom, and before preparing, serving, or eating food.

People with symptoms of hepatitis A should not handle food until they are well. Symptoms include: fever, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, stomach pain, Jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes), or dark urine, pale stools, or diarrhea.

### 2. Your Bathrooms

Maintain routine and consistent cleaning of bathrooms using a chlorine-based disinfectant (bleach) with a ratio of  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of bleach to one gallon of water. Include bathrooms that are for employees only and those that are open to the public.

### 3. Encourage people to get vaccinated

## Please post the provided Hepatitis A outbreak flyers in your bathrooms, kitchens and other communal areas.

If you need additional flyers, contact the Public Health Public Information Officer @ 831-566-4370.

For more information, visit [www.santacruzhealth.org/hepa](http://www.santacruzhealth.org/hepa) or contact the County Public Health Department @ 831-454-4114.



# SUMMER 2017: Hepatitis A outbreak

## Avoid the hospital.

### wash your hands



### get vaccinated



#### Hepatitis A Vaccination Clinics

**Santa Cruz Health Center** Mon-Fri. 1:30pm-4pm  
1080-D Emeline Ave, SC | (831) 454-4100

**Watsonville Health Center** Mon.-Fri. 1pm-3:45pm  
1430 Freedom Blvd, Suite D, Wats. | (831) 763-8400

**SSP** Mon. 9am-12pm, Tues. 5pm - 7pm, Fri. 8am-12pm  
1080-D Emeline Ave, SC

**HPHP** Coral Street Clinic, 115-A Coral St, SC  
Toll free: (866) 731-4747 | (831) 454-2080  
Mon.-Thurs. 8am - 12pm, 1pm - 5pm  
Fri. 8am - 12pm, 1pm - 3pm



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
Santa Cruz County

Questions: (831) 454-4114 or [www.santacruzhealth.org/HepA](http://www.santacruzhealth.org/HepA)

# SUMMER 2017: Hepatitis A outbreak

## Avoid the hospital.

### wash your hands



### get vaccinated



#### Hepatitis A Vaccination Clinics

**Santa Cruz Health Center** Mon-Fri. 1:30pm-4pm  
1080-D Emeline Ave, SC | (831) 454-4100

**Watsonville Health Center** Mon.-Fri. 1pm-3:45pm  
1430 Freedom Blvd, Suite D, Wats. | (831) 763-8400

**SSP** Mon. 9am-12pm, Tues. 5pm - 7pm, Fri. 8am-12pm  
1080-D Emeline Ave, SC

**HPHP** Coral Street Clinic, 115-A Coral St, SC  
Toll free: (866) 731-4747 | (831) 454-2080  
Mon.-Thurs. 8am - 12pm, 1pm - 5pm  
Fri. 8am - 12pm, 1pm - 3pm



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
Santa Cruz County

Questions: (831) 454-4114 or [www.santacruzhealth.org/HepA](http://www.santacruzhealth.org/HepA)

VERANO 2017: Brote de la Hepatitis A

Evita el hospital.

lavarse las manos



vacunarse



Clínicas de Vacunación contra la Hepatitis A

**Santa Cruz Health Ctr** Lunes-Viernes 1:30pm – 4pm  
1080-D Emeline Ave, SC | (831) 454-4100

**Watsonville Health Ctr** Lunes-Viernes 1pm–3:45pm  
1430 Freedom Blvd, Suite D, Wats. | (831) 763-8400

**SSP** Lunes 9am–12pm, Martes 5–7pm, Viernes 8am–12pm  
1080-D Emeline Ave, SC

**Clínica de HPHP** Coral Street, 115-A Coral St, SC  
Teléfono gratuito: (866) 731-4747 | (831) 454-2080  
Lunes-Jueves 8am – 12pm, 1pm – 5pm  
Viernes 8am – 12pm, 1pm – 3pm



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
Santa Cruz County

Para Preguntas: (831) 454-4114 o [www.santacruzhealth.org/HepA](http://www.santacruzhealth.org/HepA)

VERANO 2017: Brote de la Hepatitis A

Evita el hospital.

lavarse las manos



vacunarse



Clínicas de Vacunación contra la Hepatitis A

**Santa Cruz Health Ctr** Lunes-Viernes 1:30pm – 4pm  
1080-D Emeline Ave, SC | (831) 454-4100

**Watsonville Health Ctr** Lunes-Viernes 1pm–3:45pm  
1430 Freedom Blvd, Suite D, Wats. | (831) 763-8400

**SSP** Lunes 9am–12pm, Martes 5–7pm, Viernes 8am–12pm  
1080-D Emeline Ave, SC

**Clínica de HPHP** Coral Street, 115-A Coral St, SC  
Teléfono gratuito: (866) 731-4747 | (831) 454-2080  
Lunes-Jueves 8am – 12pm, 1pm – 5pm  
Viernes 8am – 12pm, 1pm – 3pm



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
Santa Cruz County

Para Preguntas: (831) 454-4114 o [www.santacruzhealth.org/HepA](http://www.santacruzhealth.org/HepA)

# SUMMER 2017: Hepatitis A outbreak

## Don't be next.

### wash your hands



### get vaccinated



#### Hepatitis A Vaccination Clinics

**Santa Cruz Health Center** Mon-Fri. 1:30pm-4pm  
1080-D Emeline Ave, SC | (831) 454-4100

**Watsonville Health Center** Mon.-Fri. 1pm-3:45pm  
1430 Freedom Blvd, Suite D, Wats. | (831) 763-8400

**SSP** Mon. 9am-12pm, Tues. 5pm - 7pm, Fri. 8am-12pm  
1080-D Emeline Ave, SC

**HPHP** Coral Street Clinic, 115-A Coral St, SC  
Toll free: (866) 731-4747 | (831) 454-2080  
Mon.-Thurs. 8am - 12pm, 1pm - 5pm  
Fri. 8am - 12pm, 1pm - 3pm



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
Santa Cruz County

Questions: (831) 454-4114 or [www.santacruzhealth.org/HepA](http://www.santacruzhealth.org/HepA)

# SUMMER 2017: Hepatitis A outbreak

## Don't be next.

### wash your hands



### get vaccinated



#### Hepatitis A Vaccination Clinics

**Santa Cruz Health Center** Mon-Fri. 1:30pm-4pm  
1080-D Emeline Ave, SC | (831) 454-4100

**Watsonville Health Center** Mon.-Fri. 1pm-3:45pm  
1430 Freedom Blvd, Suite D, Wats. | (831) 763-8400

**SSP** Mon. 9am-12pm, Tues. 5pm - 7pm, Fri. 8am-12pm  
1080-D Emeline Ave, SC

**HPHP** Coral Street Clinic, 115-A Coral St, SC  
Toll free: (866) 731-4747 | (831) 454-2080  
Mon.-Thurs. 8am - 12pm, 1pm - 5pm  
Fri. 8am - 12pm, 1pm - 3pm



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
Santa Cruz County

Questions: (831) 454-4114 or [www.santacruzhealth.org/HepA](http://www.santacruzhealth.org/HepA)

VERANO 2017: **Brote de la Hepatitis A**

**¡No sea el siguiente!**

**lavarse las manos**



**vacunarse**



**Clínicas de Vacunación contra la Hepatitis A**

**Santa Cruz Health Ctr** Lunes-Viernes 1:30pm – 4pm  
1080-D Emeline Ave, SC | (831) 454-4100

**Watsonville Health Ctr** Lunes-Viernes 1pm–3:45pm  
1430 Freedom Blvd, Suite D, Wats. | (831) 763-8400

**SSP** Lunes 9am–12pm, Martes 5–7pm, Viernes 8am–12pm  
1080-D Emeline Ave, SC

**Clínica de HPHP** Coral Street, 115-A Coral St, SC  
Teléfono gratuito: (866) 731-4747 | (831) 454-2080

Lunes-Jueves 8am – 12pm, 1pm – 5pm  
Viernes 8am – 12pm, 1pm – 3pm



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
**Santa Cruz County**

Para Preguntas: (831) 454-4114 o [www.santacruzhealth.org/HepA](http://www.santacruzhealth.org/HepA)

VERANO 2017: **Brote de la Hepatitis A**

**¡No sea el siguiente!**

**lavarse las manos**



**vacunarse**



**Clínicas de Vacunación contra la Hepatitis A**

**Santa Cruz Health Ctr** Lunes-Viernes 1:30pm – 4pm  
1080-D Emeline Ave, SC | (831) 454-4100

**Watsonville Health Ctr** Lunes-Viernes 1pm–3:45pm  
1430 Freedom Blvd, Suite D, Wats. | (831) 763-8400

**SSP** Lunes 9am–12pm, Martes 5–7pm, Viernes 8am–12pm  
1080-D Emeline Ave, SC

**Clínica de HPHP** Coral Street, 115-A Coral St, SC  
Teléfono gratuito: (866) 731-4747 | (831) 454-2080

Lunes-Jueves 8am – 12pm, 1pm – 5pm  
Viernes 8am – 12pm, 1pm – 3pm



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
**Santa Cruz County**

Para Preguntas: (831) 454-4114 o [www.santacruzhealth.org/HepA](http://www.santacruzhealth.org/HepA)

# SUMMER 2017: Hepatitis A outbreak

## Protect the people you love.

### wash your hands



### get vaccinated



#### Hepatitis A Vaccination Clinics

**Santa Cruz Health Center** Mon-Fri. 1:30pm-4pm  
1080-D Emeline Ave, SC | (831) 454-4100

**Watsonville Health Center** Mon.-Fri. 1pm-3:45pm  
1430 Freedom Blvd, Suite D, Wats. | (831) 763-8400

**SSP** Mon. 9am-12pm, Tues. 5pm - 7pm, Fri. 8am-12pm  
1080-D Emeline Ave, SC

**HPHP Coral Street Clinic**, 115-A Coral St, SC  
Toll free: (866) 731-4747 | (831) 454-2080  
Mon.-Thurs. 8am - 12pm, 1pm - 5pm  
Fri. 8am - 12pm, 1pm - 3pm



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
Santa Cruz County

Questions: (831) 454-4114 or [www.santacruzhealth.org/HepA](http://www.santacruzhealth.org/HepA)

# SUMMER 2017: Hepatitis A outbreak

## Protect the people you love.

### wash your hands



### get vaccinated



#### Hepatitis A Vaccination Clinics

**Santa Cruz Health Center** Mon-Fri. 1:30pm-4pm  
1080-D Emeline Ave, SC | (831) 454-4100

**Watsonville Health Center** Mon.-Fri. 1pm-3:45pm  
1430 Freedom Blvd, Suite D, Wats. | (831) 763-8400

**SSP** Mon. 9am-12pm, Tues. 5pm - 7pm, Fri. 8am-12pm  
1080-D Emeline Ave, SC

**HPHP Coral Street Clinic**, 115-A Coral St, SC  
Toll free: (866) 731-4747 | (831) 454-2080  
Mon.-Thurs. 8am - 12pm, 1pm - 5pm  
Fri. 8am - 12pm, 1pm - 3pm



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
Santa Cruz County

Questions: (831) 454-4114 or [www.santacruzhealth.org/HepA](http://www.santacruzhealth.org/HepA)

VERANO 2017: Brote de la Hepatitis A

Protege a los que amas.

lavarse las manos



vacunarse



Clínicas de Vacunación contra la Hepatitis A

**Santa Cruz Health Ctr** Lunes-Viernes 1:30pm – 4pm  
1080-D Emeline Ave, SC | (831) 454-4100

**Watsonville Health Ctr** Lunes-Viernes 1pm–3:45pm  
1430 Freedom Blvd, Suite D, Wats. | (831) 763-8400

**SSP** Lunes 9am–12pm, Martes 5–7pm, Viernes 8am–12pm  
1080-D Emeline Ave, SC

**Clínica de HPHP** Coral Street, 115-A Coral St, SC  
Teléfono gratuito: (866) 731-4747 | (831) 454-2080  
Lunes-Jueves 8am – 12pm, 1pm – 5pm  
Viernes 8am – 12pm, 1pm – 3pm



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
Santa Cruz County

Para Preguntas: (831) 454-4114 o [www.santacruzhealth.org/HepA](http://www.santacruzhealth.org/HepA)

VERANO 2017: Brote de la Hepatitis A

Protege a los que amas.

lavarse las manos



vacunarse



Clínicas de Vacunación contra la Hepatitis A

**Santa Cruz Health Ctr** Lunes-Viernes 1:30pm – 4pm  
1080-D Emeline Ave, SC | (831) 454-4100

**Watsonville Health Ctr** Lunes-Viernes 1pm–3:45pm  
1430 Freedom Blvd, Suite D, Wats. | (831) 763-8400

**SSP** Lunes 9am–12pm, Martes 5–7pm, Viernes 8am–12pm  
1080-D Emeline Ave, SC

**Clínica de HPHP** Coral Street, 115-A Coral St, SC  
Teléfono gratuito: (866) 731-4747 | (831) 454-2080  
Lunes-Jueves 8am – 12pm, 1pm – 5pm  
Viernes 8am – 12pm, 1pm – 3pm



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
Santa Cruz County

Para Preguntas: (831) 454-4114 o [www.santacruzhealth.org/HepA](http://www.santacruzhealth.org/HepA)

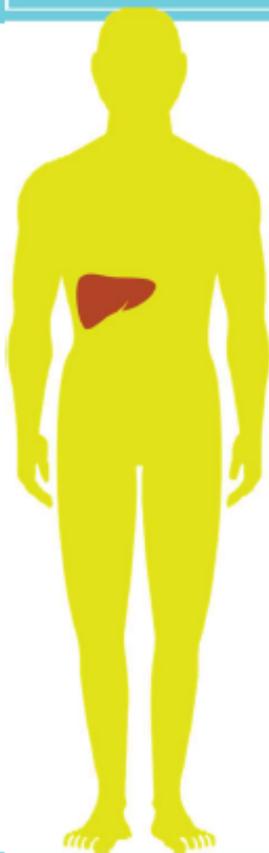
# HEPATITIS A VIRUS INFECTION

## Why Should You Care About Hepatitis A?

If a person has an infection with the Hepatitis A virus, it can easily spread from person-to-person and cause liver disease lasting a few weeks to a serious illness lasting many months. In some cases, people can die because of Hepatitis A.

## How Does It Spread?

- ➔ Touching objects or eating food that someone with Hepatitis A Infection handled
- ➔ Having sex with someone who has a Hepatitis A infection
- ➔ By the fecal-oral route (when a person ingests food or water that has been contaminated with even a tiny or microscopic amount of the feces from an infected person)



## What Are the Symptoms of Hepatitis A?



Fever



Fatigue



Nausea



Vomiting



Loss of appetite



Stomach pain



Jaundice  
(yellowing of the  
skin or eyes)



Dark urine,  
pale stools,  
diarrhea

If you think you have Hepatitis A, see your doctor or visit the closest Emergency Room. Always wash your hands with soap and water after going to the bathroom or changing diapers, and before handling food.

## How Can You Prevent Hepatitis A?

- Get the Hepatitis A vaccine
- Don't have sex with someone who has Hepatitis A infection
- Use your own towels, toothbrushes, eating utensils, or other personal items
- Don't share food, drinks, or smokes with other people



## For More Information

- Contact the Public Health Nurse's Line at 831-454-4114
- [www.santacruzhealth.org/hepa](http://www.santacruzhealth.org/hepa)



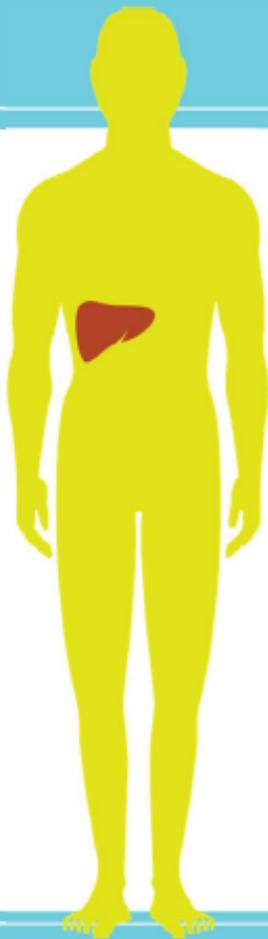
# Infección con VIRUS de la HEPATITIS A

## ¿Por Qué Debería Preocuparse Por la Hepatitis A?

Si una persona tiene una infección con el virus de la Hepatitis A, puede propagarse fácilmente de persona a persona y causar enfermedad hepática que puede durar unas pocas semanas hasta una enfermedad grave que dura muchos meses. En algunos casos, las personas pueden morir debido a la Hepatitis A.

## ¿Cómo se Propaga la Hepatitis A?

- ➔ Al tocar objetos o consumir alimentos que estuvieron en manos de alguien con una infección de la Hepatitis A
- ➔ Al tener relaciones sexuales con alguien que tenga una infección de la Hepatitis A
- ➔ Por vía fecal-oral (cuando una persona ingiere alimentos o agua que ha sido contaminada con una cantidad minúscula o microscópica de las heces fecales de una persona infectada)



## ¿Cuáles son los síntomas de la Hepatitis A?



Fiebre



Fatiga



Náusea



Vómito



Pérdida del  
Apetito



Dolor Estomacal



Ictericia  
(Coloración  
amarillenta de  
piel u ojos)



Orina oscura,  
heces pálidas,  
y diarrea

Si usted piensa que pudiera estar padeciendo de la Hepatitis A, acuda a su médico o a la sala de urgencias más cercana. Siempre lávese las manos con agua y jabón después de usar el baño o cambiar pañales y antes de entrar en contacto con alimentos.

## ¿Qué Puede Hacer Para Prevenir la Hepatitis A?

- Recibir la vacuna contra la Hepatitis A
- No tener relaciones sexuales con alguien que tenga infección con la Hepatitis A
- No compartir toallas, cepillos dentales, cubiertos, ni otros artículos personales
- No compartir comida, bebidas o cigarrillos con otra gente

## Para Mas Información

- Comuníquese a la línea de Enfermeras de Salud Pública al (831) 454-4114
- [www.santacruzhealth.org/hepa](http://www.santacruzhealth.org/hepa)



# HEPATITIS A

## General Information

### What is hepatitis?

"Hepatitis" means inflammation of the liver. The liver is a vital organ that processes nutrients, filters the blood, and fights infections. When the liver is inflamed or damaged, its function can be affected.

Hepatitis is most often caused by a virus. In the United States, the most common types of viral hepatitis are Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C. Heavy alcohol use, toxins, some medications, and certain medical conditions can also cause hepatitis.

### What is Hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a highly contagious liver infection caused by the Hepatitis A virus. It can range in severity from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a severe illness lasting several months.

### Who is at risk?

Although anyone can get Hepatitis A, some people are at greater risk, such as those who:

- Travel to or live in countries where Hepatitis A is common
- Have sexual contact with someone who has Hepatitis A
- Are men who have sexual encounters with other men
- Use recreational drugs, whether injected or not
- Have clotting-factor disorders, such as hemophilia
- Are household members or caregivers of a person infected with Hepatitis A

### How common is Hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A still occurs in the United States, although not as frequently as it once did. Over the last several decades, there has been more than a 90% decrease in Hepatitis A cases. New cases are now estimated to be around 3,000 each year. Many experts believe this decline is a result of the vaccination of children and people at risk for Hepatitis A. Many of the new cases, however, are from American travelers who got infected while traveling to parts of the world where Hepatitis A is common.



Hepatitis A can be prevented with a safe and effective vaccine.

### How is Hepatitis A spread?

Hepatitis A is usually spread when a person ingests fecal matter—even in microscopic amounts—from contact with objects, food, or drinks contaminated by feces or stool from an infected person.

Hepatitis A can be spread when:

- An infected person does not wash his/her hands properly after going to the bathroom and then touches objects or food
- A caregiver does not properly wash his or her hands after changing diapers or cleaning up the stool of an infected person
- Someone engages in sexual activities with an infected person

Hepatitis A also can be spread through contaminated food or water. Contamination of food can happen at any point: growing, harvesting, processing, handling, and even after cooking. This most often occurs in countries where Hepatitis A is common.

*Continued on next page*



U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention

## What are the symptoms of Hepatitis A?

Not everyone has symptoms. If symptoms develop, they usually appear 2 to 6 weeks after infection and can include:

- Fever
- Vomiting
- Grey-colored stools
- Fatigue
- Abdominal pain
- Joint pain
- Loss of appetite
- Dark urine
- Jaundice
- Nausea

Symptoms are more likely to occur in adults than in children. They usually last less than 2 months, although some people can be ill for as long as 6 months.



People can spread Hepatitis A even if they don't look or feel sick. Many children and some adults have no symptoms.

## How is Hepatitis A diagnosed and treated?

A doctor can determine if a person has Hepatitis A by discussing his or her symptoms and taking a blood sample. To treat Hepatitis A, doctors usually recommend rest, adequate nutrition, fluids, and medical monitoring. Some people will need to be hospitalized. It can take a few months before people begin to feel better.

## How serious is Hepatitis A?

Most people who get Hepatitis A feel sick for several months, but they usually recover completely and do not have lasting liver damage. Sometimes Hepatitis A can cause liver failure and death, although this is rare and occurs more commonly in people older than 50 and people with other liver diseases.

## Can Hepatitis A be prevented?

Yes. The best way to prevent Hepatitis A is by getting vaccinated. Experts recommend the vaccine for all children, and people with certain risk factors and medical conditions. The vaccine is also recommended for travelers to certain international countries, even if travel occurs for short times or on closed resorts. The Hepatitis A vaccine is safe and effective and given as 2 shots, 6 months apart. Both shots are needed for long-term protection. Ask if your health plan will cover travel related vaccines. You can get vaccinated at your doctor's office, as well as travel clinics and other locations. Lower cost vaccination may be available at certain pharmacies and your local health department.

## Who should get vaccinated against Hepatitis A?

Vaccination is recommended for certain groups, including:

- All children at age 1 year
- Travelers to countries where Hepatitis A is common
- Family and caregivers of adoptees from countries where Hepatitis A is common
- Men who have sexual encounters with other men
- Users of recreational drugs, whether injected or not
- People with chronic or long-term liver disease, including Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C
- People with clotting-factor disorders

## For more information

Talk to your health professional, call your health department, or visit [www.cdc.gov/hepatitis](http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis) or [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel).