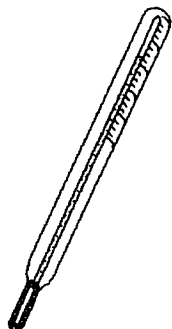




Just the Facts

57-014-0894

...About Hepatitis A



Hepatitis A is a liver infection caused by a virus. People with hepatitis A often have fever, loss of appetite, nausea and "feel sick all over." Hepatitis affects the liver, impairing function and often causing the skin and whites of the eyes to take on a yellow color (a condition called jaundice). Hepatitis A is usually quite mild and rarely results in any permanent liver damage. **Many infants and children infected with hepatitis A do not have any signs of illness.** The disease is often more severe in adults.

The hepatitis A virus is found in the stool of infected people and can spread from an infected person to food or water if careful handwashing is not done. Others can become ill after eating or drinking the contaminated items. The hepatitis A virus is especially likely to spread if people do not wash their hands after changing diapers or having a bowel movement.

After being exposed to the hepatitis A virus, a person will not become ill for several weeks. However, an injection of immune globulin soon after exposure can prevent infection. Immune globulin contains protective substances, called antibodies, against hepatitis A virus. Only a blood test can diagnose hepatitis A. No medication is available to treat it.

THINGS PARENTS CAN DO

- ◆ Child Care Facilities
- ◆ Information/Guidance
- ◆ Symptoms & Treatment

- ◆ Watch for signs of hepatitis A in the children and adults in your household if another child, parent or staff member has it.
- ◆ Be sure **all** household members wash their hands after going to the toilet and changing a diaper, and before preparing food or eating.
- ◆ Contact your physician who, in consultation with Preventive Medicine Service, will decide whether to give immune globulin injections to prevent the spread of infection.
- ◆ If your child develops hepatitis A, do not return your child to the child care facility until 1 week after the jaundice (the yellow skin color) first appeared and your child has been medically cleared to return to the facility.

For additional information contact your local health consultant or health care provider.

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