

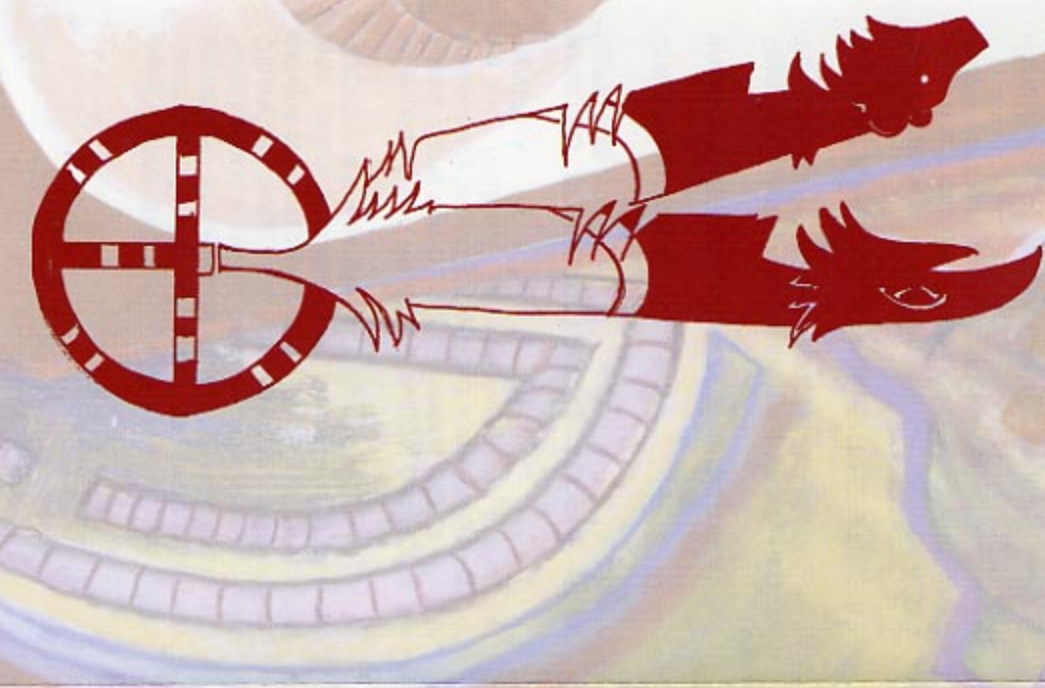


WHERE CAN I GET THE HEPATITIS A VACCINE?

All IHS, Tribal, and Urban Indian health facilities have the hepatitis A vaccine. So do many private physicians. American Indian and Alaska Native children from birth until age 18 can get vaccines FREE through the Vaccines for Children Program (VFC), which includes the hepatitis A vaccine. Check with your physician or with your local IHS, Tribal, or Urban Indian health facility.



Ask your doctor or nurse about HEPATITIS A VACCINE.
You can also call the
**CDC Hepatitis Hotline at
1-888-443-7232.**



How to Prevent Hepatitis A

- Frequent and careful handwashing
- After using the bathroom or changing diapers
- Before preparing or eating food
- Hepatitis A vaccine

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Technology for the Rural Enhancement of Communities

Hepatitis A

A VACCINE PREVENTABLE DISEASE



WHAT IS HEPATITIS A?

Hepatitis A is a serious liver disease caused by infection with the hepatitis A virus.

HOW DO PEOPLE GET HEPATITIS A?

Hepatitis A virus is found in the stool of people with hepatitis A. People get hepatitis A through close contact with someone who has it. This close contact is usually in a household. People have also gotten hepatitis A by having sex with someone who has it. People sometimes get hepatitis A from eating food or drinking water that contains the hepatitis A virus.

People with hepatitis A can spread the virus even before they feel sick.

Large outbreaks of hepatitis A used to occur every 5 to 10 years in most American Indian and Alaska Native communities. The good news is that there is a vaccine that prevents hepatitis A virus infection. Thanks to the hepatitis A vaccine, fewer people get hepatitis A than before.

HOW DO PEOPLE FEEL WHEN THEY HAVE HEPATITIS A?

Hepatitis A virus infection affects people in different ways. Children less than 6 years old

usually don't feel sick. Older children and adults usually start feeling sick about one month after they are infected. Some people have only a mild illness with fever, nausea, vomiting, tiredness, and stomach pain. Others get very sick with diarrhea, dehydration, extreme stomach pain, and a yellowing of the skin and eyes called jaundice. Liver failure and death can happen to a few people with hepatitis A.

Most people with hepatitis A will get better in a few weeks. Some may be sick for several months. People who already have other liver problems, like scarring of the liver (cirrhosis), can get very sick if they get hepatitis A.

HOW DO DOCTORS TELL IF PEOPLE HAVE HEPATITIS A?

Only a blood test can tell for sure.

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR HEPATITIS A?

There is no specific treatment for hepatitis A. Rest and drinking plenty of fluids help people feel better.

IS THERE A VACCINE TO PREVENT HEPATITIS A?

Yes, a vaccine is available to prevent hepatitis A. The vaccine is made from inactivated or killed virus, which means that it cannot give people hepatitis A.

Hepatitis A vaccine is available for people 2 years of age and older. Many American Indian and Alaska Native adults had hepatitis A when they were children, so they do not need the vaccine.

Hepatitis A vaccine is given as a shot in the upper arm. It is repeated in 6-18 months. Other vaccines may be given at the same time as hepatitis A vaccine.

WHY DO CHILDREN NEED HEPATITIS A VACCINE? I HAVEN'T HEARD OF ANYONE GETTING HEPATITIS A IN A LONG TIME.

It's true that the vaccine has really reduced the number of people who get hepatitis A. But don't be fooled - the

virus is still out there. If we stop giving our children the vaccine, hepatitis A will return.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS FROM THE HEPATITIS A VACCINE?

Almost everyone who gets the hepatitis A vaccine has no problems from it. As with any medicine, there is a small chance of a serious problem.

Mild problems, lasting 1-2 days, are:

- A sore arm
- Swelling where the shot was given
- Headache
- Tiredness
- Loss of appetite

WHO SHOULD GET THE HEPATITIS A VACCINE?

1. All American Indian and Alaska Native children.
2. Children in other communities that historically had high rates of hepatitis A.
3. People traveling to or working in countries with high rates of hepatitis A (all except Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Japan).
4. Men who have sex with men.
5. Users of street drugs.
6. People with chronic liver disease such as cirrhosis, including people who have had or are waiting for a liver transplant.
7. People with blood clotting disorders such as hemophilia.

