

For families considering international adoption, who should receive hepatitis A vaccine?

People who anticipate having close personal contact (e.g., household contact or regular babysitting) with an international adoptee from a country where HAV infection is common (e.g., all countries except the U.S., Canada, Western Europe, Japan, New Zealand, and Australia) during the first 60 days following the adoptee's arrival in the United States should get the vaccine. In addition to the adoptee's new parents and siblings, this group could include grandparents and other members of the extended family, caregivers, and healthcare providers. Ideally, the first dose of hepatitis A vaccine should be given to close contacts as soon as adoption is planned but no later than 2 weeks prior to the arrival of the adoptee. A second dose should be given no sooner than 6 months after the first dose.

What should I do if I think I've been exposed to HAV?

Consult your healthcare provider or health department right away. If you've been exposed it's important that you receive hepatitis A vaccine within two weeks of exposure. Some people need immune globulin rather than vaccine. If you do become ill with HAV, you will need to get information from your healthcare provider on how to take care of yourself. Your household and sexual contacts might need hepatitis A vaccine or immune globulin so they do not get infected.

If I've been vaccinated against hepatitis B, will this protect me from HAV?

No. Hepatitis B is caused by a different hepatitis virus and therefore hepatitis B vaccine will not protect you from HAV infection. However, a combination vaccine is available to protect adults against both virus infections.

Everyone needs vaccinations!

If you can't afford shots or don't know where to get them, call the CDC-INFO Contact Center (800) 232-4636, or call your local or state health department.



Will hepatitis A vaccine protect me against hepatitis C?

No. Hepatitis C is caused by a different hepatitis virus called hepatitis C virus (HCV). There is no vaccine available to prevent HCV infection.

Immunization Action Coalition

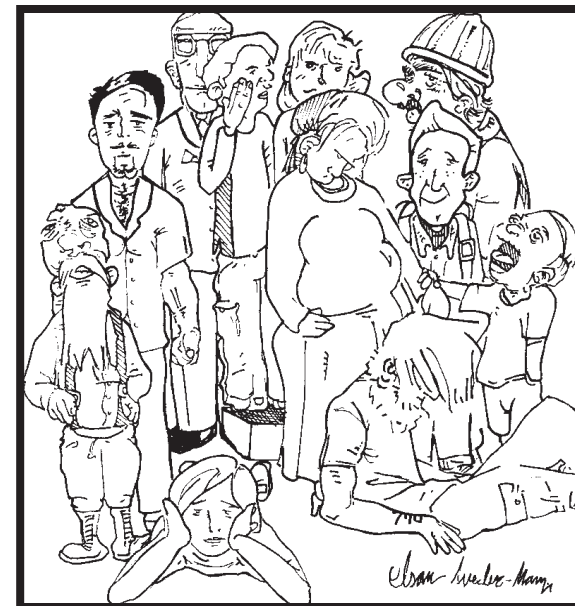
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Hepatitis A is a serious liver disease



Vaccination can protect you!

What is hepatitis A?

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

How is HAV spread?

HAV is usually spread from getting particles of fecal material (poop) into your mouth that might be too small to be seen. This happens through household or sexual contact with an infected person or by eating HAV-contaminated food or drinking HAV-contaminated water.

Casual contact, such as in a school or work setting, does not spread HAV.



What are the symptoms of HAV infection?

Infected persons can have no symptoms at all or be extremely ill. Only 30% of children less than six years of age develop symptoms, while 70% of older children and adults develop symptoms.

If a person does develop symptoms, they might include fever, tiredness, loss of appetite, nausea, abdominal pain, dark urine, or jaundice (yellowing of the eyes and skin). These symptoms can last up to six months. Even without symptoms, people infected with HAV can spread the infection to others.

How serious is HAV infection?

About 30% of people with HAV require hospitalization. Adults who become ill often miss several weeks of work. Although deaths due to HAV are uncommon, death still can occur from overwhelming HAV infection that causes liver failure.

How can HAV infection be prevented?

Safe and effective vaccines to prevent HAV infection has been available in the U.S. since 1995. Good hand washing might also help stop the spread of HAV. Always wash your hands with soap and water after using the toilet, changing a diaper, and before preparing or eating food.

Who should get hepatitis A vaccine?

The following groups of people should get vaccinated against HAV:

- Any person who wishes to be protected from HAV infection
- All children who are one year of age (i.e., 12-23 months of age)
- Men who have sex with men
- Users of street drugs (injecting and non-injecting)
- People who travel or work in any area of the world except the U.S., Canada, Western Europe, Japan, New Zealand, and Australia
- People who will have close personal contact with an international adoptee from a country where HAV infection is common (e.g., all countries except the U.S., Canada, Western Europe, Japan, New Zealand, and Australia) during the first 60 days following the adoptee's arrival in the U.S.
- People with chronic liver disease, including hepatitis C
- People working with HAV in a laboratory
- People with clotting factor disorders, (e.g., hemophilia)
- People who have recently been exposed to HAV (in the past 2 weeks)

How many shots are needed?

Children and adults need two doses of hepatitis A vaccine, spaced at least six months apart.

At least 94% of people will be protected after the first dose, but a second dose is necessary to assure long-term protection. (If your healthcare provider uses the hepatitis A/hepatitis B combination vaccine which is licensed for use in adults, three doses are needed to complete the series.)

How long does hepatitis A vaccine protect you?

Research suggests that protection will last for at least 25 years in adults and at least 14–20 years in children.

How safe is hepatitis A vaccine? Does it have any side effects?

Many studies have shown that hepatitis A vaccine is very safe. Since 1995, millions of doses have been given worldwide and in the U.S. with no reports of serious health problems linked to the vaccine. Side effects might include soreness at the injection site, headache, and tiredness. These symptoms, if they occur, last for a short time only.

How effective is hepatitis A vaccine?

Almost 100% of people are protected from HAV infection after getting the full two-dose series of vaccine.

How can I protect myself against HAV when traveling?

Get vaccinated against HAV before traveling to any area of the world except the U.S., Canada, Western Europe, Japan, New Zealand, and Australia. Discuss the timing of your hepatitis A vaccinations with your healthcare provider. You might also need to receive immune globulin depending on your age, health status, and the length of time before your departure.