



# Better2Know

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## Hepatitis A Fact Sheet

### What is Hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a viral infection of the liver. It is an acute infection rather than a long-term condition. This means that people usually recover from the infection quite quickly. However, as part of the acute phase, on rare occasions, Hepatitis A can cause life-threatening liver damage, though this is extremely rare.

Hepatitis A can be transmitted sexually, particularly through unprotected anal sex. The virus can also be passed on through contaminated food and water, as well as person-to-person contact and/or the sharing of infected needles (usually for recreational drug use).

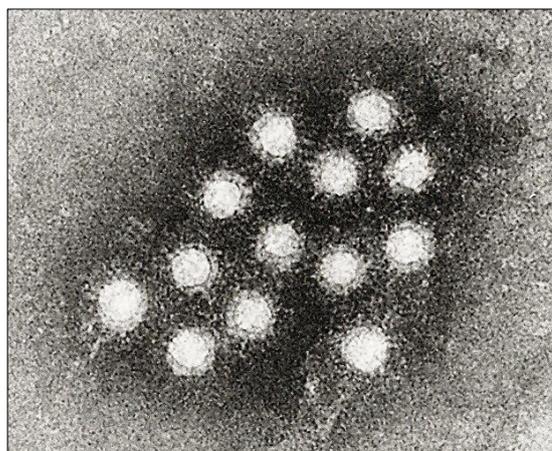
### What are the symptoms (if any)?

Hepatitis A symptoms tend to develop around four weeks after infection. Some people will not have any symptoms, others may feel very unwell. When symptoms are present, they may include: flu-like illness, joint and muscle pain, loss of appetite, fever, itching, nausea and vomiting. Jaundice can also occur if the liver becomes unable to remove bilirubin (a substance that a fully functioning liver is normally able to remove) from the blood.

### How is it treated?

Other than rest, most people do not require specific treatment for Hepatitis A. You should take painkillers as needed and maintain cool, ventilated surroundings. Ordinarily, those infected will make a full recovery after a few weeks, and should then be immune from any further Hepatitis A infections. You should also avoid alcohol and maintain a high standard of personal hygiene to avoid passing the virus onto someone else.

However, it is still important that the infection is monitored to check the development of chronic disease.



*Hepatitis A*

### What happens if you do not get treated?

If a chronic Hepatitis A infection is left untreated, it can increase your risk of contracting HIV, and other STIs, through unprotected sexual intercourse. An unmonitored infection can also cause chronic inflammation of the liver, potentially leading to liver cancer. Once you have recovered from Hepatitis A, you should be immune to the virus for life.

### Better2Know Testing Information

Better2Know offers Hepatitis A testing as part of our Hepatitis Screen. A simple blood sample is all that is required and can be used to detect other STIs, should you wish to be tested for them. Results are normally available within one working day from the sample's arrival at the laboratory.

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