

**HEPATITIS C** Symptoms may include abdominal discomfort, nausea and vomiting, and jaundice. Most persons do not recall having had symptoms. Transmission occurs the same way as Hepatitis B. The incubation ranges from 2 to 6 weeks most commonly, within 6-9 weeks. There is no vaccine available for Hepatitis C. However, if you've been diagnosis with Hepatitis C you may wish to consult with your doctor about getting the Hepatitis A vaccine.

# HEPATITIS

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## **WHAT IS VIRAL HEPATITIS?**

Viral Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver caused by viruses.

## **WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF HEPATITIS?**

Symptoms of Hepatitis A, B and C may include fever, stomach ache, nausea, loss of appetite, fatigue, bone and muscle ache, dark urine, pale stools, followed in a few days by yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice).

Anyone having these symptoms, especially the dark urine, pale stools or jaundice, should see a physician at once. A blood test will tell your physician which type of hepatitis you have.

**HEPATITIS A** is usually marked by a sudden onset of symptoms and a high fever (102 to 103) occurring from three to six weeks (usually 30 days) after exposure to the virus. The virus is found in the stool (bowel movement) of an infected person, and is spread from one person to another through contaminated food or water. It is not found in saliva, and is not air borne.

- ❖ WASH YOUR HANDS with soap and water after going to the bathroom, before preparing food and before eating.
- ❖ Make sure no sewage has contaminated your water supply. If you think this has happened, boil your water for 10-15 minutes before using.
- ❖ **DO NOT CONTINUE WORKING** if your occupation is in *child/patient care or food handling* until released by a physician, or health department.

## **WHAT ABOUT SHOTS FOR HEPATITIS A?**

- ❖ There is a new vaccine for the prevention of Hepatitis A. This vaccine **must be given before** you have been exposed to the virus.

## **If you do not have a vaccination, never had Hepatitis A and are exposed:**

- ❖ Immune Globulin (ISG) is partially effective in preventing Hepatitis A. To be effective it should be given within 14 days after exposure to the infected person
- ❖ It is recommended for those who live in the same house, or had sexual exposure to the patient, and food handlers.
- ❖ It is not a vaccine. Protection lasts for 6-8 weeks.
- ❖ If you have been exposed to a person with Hepatitis A, and you work in child/patient care or food handling, you may continue working. Strict handwashing techniques are recommended. Be on the alert for the first symptoms of Hepatitis.

**HEPATITIS B** has a slower onset with little or no fever. Symptoms occur from 2 to 6 months after contact (usually 2 months). It is spread by receiving the blood of an infected person or skin piercing articles contaminated by the blood of the person (such as ear piercing, tattooing, drug and needle use). For this reason people who have had Hepatitis B are not allowed to donate blood or be an organ donor. Hepatitis B may also be spread through semen.

### **NEVER SHARE NEEDLES OR SYRINGES**

- ❖ Tell your physician and dentist that you have had Hepatitis B or C.

## **WHAT ABOUT SHOTS FOR HEPATITIS B?**

- ❖ The Hepatitis B vaccine (a series of 3 shots) is effective in preventing this type of hepatitis. It must be given before exposure. The vaccine is recommended for all persons with high risk behavior/occupation and should be included in a child's immunization schedule.