

HEPATITIS A

What causes it?

Virus (HAV).

How do I get it?

- usually spread by eating food or drinking water that is contaminated by infected feces: for example, when an infected person preparing food does not wash their hands after going to the toilet
- may also be transmitted sexually in unprotected anal sex – men having sex with men are at a greater risk
- can be spread by contaminated blood, for example sharing needles for injection drug use

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms may be severe or mild and can include:

- feeling weak or unwell
- aches or flu-like symptoms
- fever
- loss of appetite or weight
- nausea or abdominal pain
- dark urine
- diarrhea
- yellowish color of skin or whites of eyes (jaundice)

How do you test for it?

Blood test.

What treatment is available?

- there is no cure for hepatitis A but most people recover within 2 months due to the body's natural immunity: if you've had it once, you will have natural protection that prevents you from getting it again
- your doctor or nurse will talk to you about medicine you can take to reduce the harmful effects of hepatitis A: get plenty of rest, eat a healthy diet, and cut down or stop smoking or drinking alcohol

What complications can happen?

- severe damage to your liver (rare)
- death (rare)

What else do I need to know?

Talk to your nurse or doctor about getting the vaccine to protect you against hepatitis A if you are a man who has sex with men or an injecting drug user.

Where can I get tested?

You can get tested at:

- YCDC (Yukon Communicable Disease Control)
#4 Hospital Road
667-8323 or 1-800-661-0408 ext. 8323
- Community Health Centre
- [Medical Clinics](#)