

## For more information:

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Division of STD Prevention (DSTDP)  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov/std](http://www.cdc.gov/std)

CDC-INFO Contact Center  
1-800-CDC-INFO  
1-800-232-4636  
[cdcinfo@cdc.gov](mailto:cdcinfo@cdc.gov)

If you have been diagnosed with Hepatitis or any sexually transmitted infection (STI), your sexual partner(s) should be tested, even if they have no symptoms. If you have been diagnosed with Hepatitis or any STI you should have a blood test in three months to detect blood-borne infections you might have contracted at the time you tested positive.

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# Hepatitis

## Facts & Info

### What is Hepatitis?

Hepatitis means inflammation of the liver. The liver processes nutrients, filters the blood and fights infections. The liver cannot work as effectively when it is inflamed or damaged, which can result in further health issues.



## What is Hepatitis?

Viral hepatitis affects millions of people worldwide, causing both acute (short-term) and chronic (long-term) liver disease. Hepatitis types A, B, and C are the most common types found in the United States.

## How do you get Hepatitis?

Hepatitis A can be spread through close personal contact with someone who is infected with the virus. This includes sex with an infected person, caring for someone who is ill or using drugs with others, or consuming contaminated food or drink.

Hepatitis B is usually spread through exposure to an infected person's blood, semen or other body fluids, usually through sex, injection drug use, needle sticks, or passed from an infected mother to her baby. Hepatitis B virus is also not spread through contaminated food or water unlike some other forms of hepatitis virus.

Hepatitis C virus is usually spread through sharing needles or injection drug use, unsafe tattoo or piercing procedures, needle sticks, or passed from an infected mother to her baby. It can be transmitted sexually, but it is rare.

## How is Hepatitis treated?

There is no treatment for Hepatitis A other than supportive care. Treatments for Hepatitis B, may include antiviral drugs. Liver transplant is the last resort. Over 90% of Hepatitis C-infected people can be cured of the infection with 8–12 weeks of oral therapy. Any person infected with any form of hepatitis should avoid alcohol, as it may worsen liver disease

## What are the symptoms of Hepatitis?

Viral hepatitis symptoms are similar no matter which type of hepatitis you have. Symptoms may include:

- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes),
- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Fatigue
- Dark urine
- Joint pain
- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhea
- Nausea and vomiting

Some people may have no symptoms and symptoms are least likely for people with Hepatitis C infection

## Can Hepatitis be prevented?

Vaccinations are available for Hepatitis A and B. There is no vaccination for Hepatitis C.

Vaccinations are encouraged for everyone, but are especially important for those who fall into higher risk groups: men who have sex with men; intravenous drug users; doctors, nurses, or those who are likely to be exposed to blood products in their jobs; those who travel outside the United States; and people who have HIV or have received organ transplants.

Hepatitis C testing is recommended for all adults age 18 years and older; pregnant women; injection drug users; recipients of clotting factors made before 1987; hemodialysis patients; recipients of blood or solid organ transplant before 1992; infants born to infected mothers; people with undiagnosed abnormal liver test results and people with HIV infection

## When will the symptoms appear?

**Incubation periods vary by type of hepatitis infections, but generally range from 15 to 50 days for Hepatitis A; 45 to 160 days for Hepatitis B; and 14 to 180 days for Hepatitis C.**