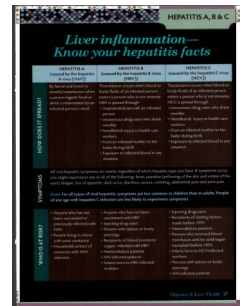


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## HEPATITIS A, B & C

# Liver inflammation— Know your hepatitis facts

	HEPATITIS A (caused by the hepatitis A virus [HAV])	HEPATITIS B (caused by the hepatitis B virus [HBV])	HEPATITIS C (caused by the hepatitis C virus [HCV])
HOW DOES IT SPREAD?	By faecal-oral (stool to mouth) transmission when a person ingests food or drink contaminated by an infected person's stool.	Transmission occurs when blood or body fluids of an infected person enters a person who is not immune. HBV is spread through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unprotected sex with an infected person</li> <li>• Intravenous drug users who share needles</li> <li>• Needlestick injury in health care workers.</li> <li>• From an infected mother to her baby during birth</li> <li>• Exposure to infected blood in any situation</li> </ul>	Transmission occurs when blood or body fluids of an infected person enters a person who is not immune. HCV is spread through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intravenous drug users who share needles</li> <li>• Needlestick injury in health care workers</li> <li>• From an infected mother to her baby during birth</li> <li>• Exposure to infected blood in any situation</li> </ul>
SYMPTOMS	All viral hepatitis symptoms are similar regardless of which hepatitis type you have. If symptoms occur, you might experience any or all of the following: fever, jaundice (yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes), fatigue, loss of appetite, dark urine, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain and joint pain.  <b>Note:</b> For all types of viral hepatitis, symptoms are less common in children than in adults. People of any age with hepatitis C infection are less likely to experience symptoms.		
WHO IS AT RISK?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anyone who has not been vaccinated or previously infected with HAV</li> <li>• People living in places with poor sanitation</li> <li>• Household contact of someone with HAV infection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anyone who has not been vaccinated with HBV</li> <li>• Injecting drug users</li> <li>• Persons with tattoos or body piercings</li> <li>• Recipients of blood products/ organs infected with HBV</li> <li>• Haemodialysis patients</li> <li>• HIV-infected patients</li> <li>• Infants born to HBV-infected mothers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Injecting drug users</li> <li>• Recipients of clotting factors made before 1995</li> <li>• Haemodialysis patients</li> <li>• Persons who received blood transfusion and /or solid organ transplant before 1995</li> <li>• Infants born to HCV-infected mothers</li> <li>• Persons with tattoos or body piercings</li> <li>• HIV-infected patients</li> </ul>

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	HEPATITIS A (caused by the hepatitis A virus [HAV])	HEPATITIS B (caused by the hepatitis B virus [HBV])	HEPATITIS C (caused by the hepatitis C virus [HCV])
<b>HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE IT?</b>	The only way of knowing whether you have already been infected is to have your blood tested for HAV, HBV or HCV infections.		
<b>INCUBATION PERIOD</b>	15 to 50 days, average 28 days. Symptoms do not develop until after the incubation period is over. An infected person can spread the disease to others from at least two weeks before symptoms develop until the time their symptoms disappear.	45 to 160 days, average 120 days. Infected persons are infectious during this time as well as throughout the course of the disease.	14 to 180 days, average 45 days. An infected person can spread the disease any time after the virus has entered his/her body and throughout the duration of the disease.
<b>COMPLICATIONS/ LONG TERM CONSEQUENCES</b>	Most people recover in several weeks or sometimes months. It usually resolves after several weeks. <b>There is no chronic infection.</b>	It can take several months to a year to recover from the symptoms. Acute HBV infection can—but doesn't always—lead to chronic infection. These chronic infections can develop into liver cirrhosis or liver cancer.	Acute HCV infection is a short-term illness that occurs within the first six months after someone is exposed to HCV. About 85 percent of acute infections lead to chronic infection. Chronic hepatitis C is a serious disease whereby 20 percent of chronically infected persons go on to develop cirrhosis.
<b>TREATMENT</b>	There is no specific treatment for hepatitis A. Therapy includes supportive care such as replacing lost fluids.	Chronic HBV is treated with drugs such as interferon and antiviral agents. These drugs are effective for preventing serious liver problems. All patients with chronic hepatitis B should be seen regularly by a doctor.	Hepatitis C is treated with pegylated interferon and ribavirin. Treatment is effective and cure is achieved in a significant proportion of patients.
<b>CAN I BE REINFECTED?</b>	Once you've had HAV infection, you cannot get it again.	Patients with hepatitis B develop protective antibodies and can't get it again when they are exposed to the virus.	Patients with hepatitis C can get reinfected if they are exposed to the virus again.

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	HEPATITIS A (caused by the hepatitis A virus [HAV])	HEPATITIS B (caused by the hepatitis B virus [HBV])	HEPATITIS C (caused by the hepatitis C virus [HCV])
PREVENTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hepatitis A vaccination is the best protection</li> <li>Improved sanitation</li> <li>Personal hygiene practices such as regular hand washing and adequate safe-drinking water</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hepatitis B vaccination is the best protection</li> <li>Every pregnant woman should be tested for hepatitis B; infants born to HBV-infected mothers should be given HBIG (hepatitis B immune globulin) and vaccine within 12 hours of birth.</li> <li>Don't shoot drugs or share needles</li> <li>Don't share personal items, e.g., razors, toothbrushes</li> <li>Consider the risks before getting a tattoo or body piercing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no vaccine for HCV.</li> <li>Don't shoot drugs or share needles</li> <li>Don't share personal items, e.g., razors, toothbrushes</li> <li>Consider the risks before getting a tattoo or body piercing</li> </ul>
WHO SHOULD BE VACCINATED?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommended for all children aged one year or older</li> <li>Household contacts of infected persons</li> <li>International travellers to countries where hepatitis A is common</li> <li>Individuals with chronic liver disease</li> <li>Anyone who wants protection from HAV infection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Persons with high-risk sexual behaviour</li> <li>Sex partners and household contacts of infected persons</li> <li>Injecting drug users</li> <li>Persons who frequently require blood or blood products</li> <li>Recipients of solid organ transplantation</li> <li>Those at occupational risk of HBV infection, including health care workers</li> <li>International travellers to countries with high rates of HBV</li> <li>Anyone who wants protection from HBV infection</li> </ul>	<p>There is no vaccine for HCV.</p>

Health & Beauty would like to thank Dr. Ganesalingam Kanagasabai, Consultant Gastroenterologist at Sime Darby Medical Centre Subang Jaya for contributing to a portion of this article.

Reference:  

- <http://www.who.int/topics/hepatitis/factsheets/>
- [www.immunize.org/en/index.html](http://www.immunize.org/en/index.html)
- [www.britisHLivertrust.org.uk](http://www.britisHLivertrust.org.uk)



**Important note:**  
Avoid alcohol as it can worsen liver disease!