



# Help With Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B

Hepatitis is a disease caused by viruses that damage the liver. Inflammation, swelling and tenderness of the liver may occur from the damage. Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B are the most common forms of viral hepatitis.

## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS?

Viral hepatitis symptoms are similar for all types of hepatitis. A viral hepatitis infection is often hard to detect because the signs or symptoms are rarely identified. When symptoms are present, the individual may experience any or all of the following:

- fever
- fatigue
- jaundice
- loss of appetite
- dark urine
- joint pain
- abdominal pain
- diarrhea
- nausea
- vomiting

## HOW LONG AFTER CONTACT CAN ILLNESS DEVELOP?

Hepatitis A	2 – 7 weeks
Hepatitis B	2 – 6 months, average 90 days

## HOW IS IT SPREAD?

Hepatitis A	Contact with an infected stool; consuming contaminated water or food; close contact with infected individual.
Hepatitis B	Contact with infected person's blood, saliva, semen or other body fluid.

## WHEN IS THE CHILD MOST CONTAGIOUS?

Hepatitis A	From 2 weeks before the illness until 1 week after jaundice has begun
Hepatitis B	Virus can be spread at any time with the listed contact

## WHEN CAN THE CHILD RETURN TO SCHOOL?

Hepatitis A	After 1 week from the onset of jaundice
Hepatitis B	After cleared by physician.

## HOW CAN WE PREVENT SPREADING INFECTION?

Hepatitis A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Wash hands and practice good hygiene.</li><li>- Properly dispose of diapers and disinfect changing tables.</li><li>- Avoid potentially contaminated food or water.</li></ul> Hepatitis A vaccines are recommended for caregivers, children living in communities that have a high rate of the disease, patients with liver disease and people who travel to underdeveloped countries.
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Hepatitis B	Taking the Hepatitis B vaccine is the best protection. It is also necessary to screen pregnant women, treat infants born to infected women, and screen all blood, organ and tissues donors.
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## WHAT IS THE TREATMENT?

Hepatitis A	There is no specific treatment for acute Hepatitis A other than symptomatic care. Alcohol should be avoided.
Hepatitis B	Hepatitis B is only treated if the infection is chronic and causing ongoing liver damage. Presently there are three FDA approved drugs for treatment of chronic hepatitis B: Alpha – interferon, Lamivudine and Adefovir dipivoxil. Alcohol should be avoided. Liver transplant is the last resort.

*This general healthcare information should not be used as a substitute or in place of contacting your child's healthcare provider. If you need further assistance, call 404-250-kids to speak to a pediatric nurse. For more information check out our Web site at [www.choa.org](http://www.choa.org) and click on medical library, for professionals or for parents.*