

Useful websites

Remember

The Virus has to be eaten to cause infection

- Always wash your hands with hot soapy water before preparing food.
- Keep your kitchen clean and dry. Wash and dry utensils between each preparation stage.
- Keep pets out of the kitchen. Wash hands after handling them.
- Take chilled or frozen food home as quickly as possible.
**Keep your fridge/freezer at the correct temperature.
Buy a fridge thermometer.**
- Check dates on goods and use food within the recommended period.
- Store raw and cooked foods separately.
- Cook food thoroughly.
- Observe microwave standing times.

This information was correct at the time of printing. While the Trust makes every reasonable effort to keep its information leaflets up to date, very recent changes may not yet be reflected in the guidance and you should discuss this with the clinical staff at the time of your appointment.

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HEPATITIS A

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

Infection Prevention and Control Department

Sunderland Royal Hospital

What is Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is a world-wide viral disease which frequently causes epidemics in nursery day care centres, schools and colleges.

The onset is usually abrupt, with fever, malaise, loss of appetite, nausea and abdominal discomfort, followed by jaundice. Pale faeces and dark urine are often noticed in the early stage of jaundice. The only significant carrier of Hepatitis A is man.

How Hepatitis A is Spread

Hepatitis A is spread by:-

- Eating the virus from the faeces of an Infected person.
- The consumption of food or water which has been contaminated by faeces from an infected person.
- Handling or eating raw or under-cooked shellfish (molluscs) harvested from contaminated waters.

The virus must be taken in by mouth to cause the infection, therefore transmission or spread is prevented by particular attention to hand washing especially after using the toilet or nappy changing and before handling or preparing food.

Hands should be washed with soap under running water for at least ten seconds using vigorous friction and covering all areas of the hands, dry thoroughly.

Admission to Hospital

On admission to hospital you may be admitted to a side-room in order to prevent the spread of infection. The nurse will need to know:-

- If you have been in contact with anyone with jaundice.
- Your occupation - this is especially relevant if you are a food handler, health care worker or attend any school/college, day centre or institution.

The period of infectivity is from 10 days before the onset of the symptoms until approximately 10 days after the onset of the jaundice. The jaundice disappears within one or two weeks. Most patients recover completely within a few weeks of the onset of the symptoms.

Following a Hepatitis A infection an Environmental Health Officer will visit you. This will be either while you are in hospital or when you return home. He/she may request further blood specimens from you and members of your household. These samples will be taken at your GP's surgery.

On discharge from hospital and 10 days from the onset of jaundice you are safe to:-

- Eat out in cafes or restaurants.
- You are able to go on holiday *if* your symptoms have settled.
- You are able to come into contact with children, Remembering careful hand washing.
- You will be able to prepare food for your family again, Remembering careful hand washing.

Treatment

In some cases of Hepatitis A severe dehydration may occur. This will require the replacement of body fluids by Intravenous therapy. For uncomplicated cases, medication is not generally indicated.