

Viral Hepatitis

Protect Yourself from Getting Viral Hepatitis

- If you travel to countries where HAV is common, boil or cook your food and water
- Wash your hands before handling food
- Wash your hands after using the restroom and after diaper changing
- Avoid blood and body fluids
- Practice safe sex
- Avoid sharing needles to shoot drugs or any other drug equipment
- Avoid sharing any other items that may have blood on them

Get the Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B Vaccines

- If you are at risk of getting hepatitis
- As part of routine vaccines
- To be safe from getting HAV or HBV

Talk to your doctor or health care provider about getting the hepatitis A and B vaccines.

For More Information

Call your health care provider, your local health department or visit:
www.health.mo.gov

More information available at:
www.hcvadvocate.org
www.hbvadvocate.org
www.cdc.gov/hepatitis



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What You Need To Know

Missouri Department of Health
and Senior Services

Viral Hepatitis



Viral hepatitis is caused by a virus that infects the liver and can be spread to others. Hepatitis A, B and C are the most common types and can all lead to severe illness or even death.

People with signs of hepatitis may:

- Feel tired all the time
- Have a fever
- Have aching muscles or joints
- Have an upset stomach or throw up
- Have stomach pain
- Have diarrhea
- Have jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes)
- Have dark urine
- Have light-colored stools
- Not feel hungry

The only way for you to know if you have viral hepatitis A, B or C is to get a blood test.

Talk to your doctor or nurse about what blood tests you need.

Hepatitis A Virus (HAV)

- Infects 21,000 people in the U.S. each year
- May make you very sick, but most often goes away within three to six months without lasting liver damage

Hepatitis B Virus (HBV)

- Infects 40,000 people in the U.S. each year
- 1.2 million people in the U.S. have HBV and will have it for the rest of their lives

Hepatitis C Virus (HCV)

- Infects 16,000 people in the U.S. each year
- 3.2 million people in the U.S. have HCV and may not be aware of it



- Most people do not have signs of disease and may not have symptoms until decades after infection
- HCV can be treated and for most the virus will be cleared from the body
- HCV testing is recommended for anyone born between 1945 and 1965

You may be at risk of getting:

HAV if you:

- Eat food that has HAV in it
- Travel to countries where food and water are not clean
- Come in contact with fecal matter (stool) from a person with HAV
- Have children who go to the same day care as someone who has HAV
- Are in close contact with an adoptive child from a place where HAV is common
- Use street drugs

HBV or HCV if you:

- Come in contact with infected blood or body fluids
- Share items that may have blood on them (toothbrushes, razors, nail clippers and any equipment used for ear piercing, body piercing or tattooing)
- Are born to a mother with the virus
- Received blood or organs before 1992
- Received blood products before 1997

- Shared needles to shoot drugs (even once) many years ago

HAV, HBV or HCV if you:

- Live with someone who has the virus
- Have unprotected sex with a partner whose infection status is unknown or with someone who has the virus
- Share needles to shoot drugs or share “works”