

Factsheet: Heps A, B and C



For more information about anything in this factsheet, phone the Hepatitis Infoline on 1800 803 990 or go to www.hep.org.au

	Hep A	Hep B	Hep C
What is it?	A liver infection caused by hep A virus. The virus makes people sick but only for 1-3 weeks.	A liver infection caused by hep B virus. Most adults who get hep B clear the infection. Most children who get hep B develop hep B for life and have risk of liver disease later in life.	An easily-cured liver infection caused by hep C virus.
Window period (the time between infection and the illness showing up in blood tests)	Blood tests usually not done due to the short nature of illness, but usually 2-4 weeks.	4-6 weeks (HBsAg).	For adults: 2 weeks for PCR test; 12 weeks for antibody test. For babies: 8 weeks for PCR test; 18 months for antibody test.
Transmitted by	Food or water contaminated with sewerage. Anything with human faeces (poo) on it that comes in contact with the mouth.	Mother to baby. Blood-to-blood contact (when the blood of someone with hep B gets into another person's bloodstream). Sexual contact.	Blood-to-blood contact (when the blood of someone with hep C gets into another person's bloodstream). Mother to baby.
Treatment	Rest and keeping up fluids, but no treatment needed. Some people use complementary therapies (e.g. herbal) to manage their symptoms. Care must be taken as some therapies may cause liver damage.	Good treatments are available for all adults who hold Medicare cards. Treatment aims to prevent liver damage but is not an actual cure. Not everyone will need treatment and there are short- or long-term options. Phone the <i>Hepatitis Infoline</i> for more information.	Very good treatments are available for all adults who hold Medicare cards. These treatments give high cure rates for all hep C genotypes. Speak to a doctor or phone the <i>Hepatitis Infoline</i> for info about their treatment options.

<p>Things which put people at risk</p>	<p>Not being vaccinated.</p> <p>Eating food where proper hygiene has not been practiced.</p> <p>Household contact with a person who has hep A.</p> <p>Sexual contact (involving anal sex) with a person who has hep A.</p> <p>Travelling through developing countries without having been vaccinated.</p>	<p>Not being vaccinated.</p> <p>Being born to a mum who has hep B, or being born in a developing country where there are high levels of hep B.</p> <p>Sexual contact with a person who has hep B.</p> <p>Sharing fits and equipment when injecting drugs.</p> <p>Having a needlestick injury, or tattooing or body piercing with contaminated equipment.</p>	<p>Sharing fits and equipment when injecting drugs.</p> <p>Tattooing or body piercing with contaminated equipment.</p> <p>Sex between men (when HIV is present).</p> <p>Having a needlestick injury.</p> <p>Receiving blood products before 1990 in Australia.</p> <p>Medical procedures in developing countries.</p>
<p>Vaccine</p>	<p>Yes. It is safe and effective.</p>	<p>Yes. Safe and effective, and part of the national immunisation program.</p>	<p>None available.</p>
<p>Prevention</p>	<p>Get vaccinated.</p> <p>Wash hands after going to the toilet and before eating.</p> <p>Household contacts and sexual partners of someone with hep A should be given immunoglobulin (drug that gives short-term protection).</p> <p>Practice safer sex.</p>	<p>Get vaccinated.</p> <p>Babies born to mums with hep B should receive Hb immunoglobulin and vaccination within 12 hours of birth. Hep B vaccination for babies is part of the national immunisation program.</p> <p>Don't share fits or other equipment when injecting drugs.</p> <p>Avoid blood-to-blood contact.</p> <p>Practice safer sex.</p>	<p>Do not share fits or other equipment when injecting drugs.</p> <p>Avoid other blood-to-blood contact.</p> <p>Avoid backyard tattooists and piercers.</p> <p>Use shops that follow proper sterile procedures.</p> <p>Avoid needlestick injuries.</p> <p>Men who have sex with other men can use safer sex practices.</p>

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This factsheet was developed by Hepatitis NSW. It was reviewed by the Hepatitis NSW Medical and Research Advisory Panel.

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