

Do adults need vaccination against hepatitis A?

What is hepatitis?

Hepatitis is a liver disease. There are three main types of hepatitis caused by viruses: hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C. Hepatitis A and hepatitis B are vaccine-preventable. This means vaccines may help protect you from these two infections. There is no vaccine against hepatitis C.

What is hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a contagious liver infection. A virus causes it. Hepatitis A can cause a mild illness that lasts a few weeks. In 10%-15% of patients it can cause lingering illness that lasts many months.

What are the symptoms of hepatitis A in adults?

- Fever
- Tiredness or weakness
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea and vomiting
- Stomach pain
- Joint pain
- Dark urine
- Light-colored bowel movements
- Yellow skin and eyes

How can you get hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is usually spread by stool from a person infected with the virus. You may get hepatitis A by:

- Eating food or drinking water carrying hepatitis A virus
- Touching an object that has infected stool on it and then putting your hand to your mouth
- Having oral-anal sex with an infected person

In addition, traveling to a country where hepatitis A is more common may put you at greater risk for infection.

How can you help prevent hepatitis A?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends vaccination against hepatitis A for people at risk for this infection. Ask your healthcare provider if you are at risk for hepatitis A.

Hepatitis A vaccination may not result in protection for every adult vaccinated.

Know your risk for hepatitis A infection.

Ask your healthcare provider if hepatitis A vaccination is right for you.