

**HEPATITIS A, B AND C  
VIRAL INFECTIONS OF THE LIVER**

	Hepatitis A HAV	Hepatitis B HBV	Hepatitis C HCV
What is it?	Infection of the liver Most people fully recover Symptoms last about a month	Infection of the liver Most adults recover fully, but the infection remains in up to 6% of adults Symptoms in about 50% of those infected	Infection of the liver; the most common chronic blood borne infection 75%-85% develop chronic disease Most never have symptoms
How is it spread?	Fecal-oral route. Sexual activity Contaminated water or food Undercooked shellfish.	Any contact with blood or body fluids Sexual Activity Sharing needles or “works” when shooting drugs. Women who have HBV can spread the virus to the baby during birth.	Contact with the blood; such as Transfusions and Injecting drugs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual activity with multiple partners</li> </ul> Less common: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Body piercing and getting a tattoo</li> </ul>
Who is at risk?	Men who have sex with men Sex partners of infected persons Household contacts of infected persons All illegal drug users Persons traveling to countries where HAV is common	Persons having sex without a condom Persons with more than one sex partner In a 6 month period Persons with a history of an STD Men who have sex with men Sex partners of an infected person Persons who use illegal drugs Household contacts of an infected person	Injecting drug users Recipients of clotting factor made before 1987 Recipients of blood/organs before 1992 People with undiagnosed liver problems People having sex with multiple partners
What if you are infected?	Viral symptoms are similar no matter the type; fever, loss of appetite, fatigue, dark urine, jaundice, joint pain, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting. <u>HCV is less likely to cause symptoms.</u>		
	There is no long-term infection with hepatitis A. Once you have HAV you can't get it again. A small percent of people infected with HAV will have a prolonged illness or have relapsing symptoms over 6-9 months.	People who have chronic infection are at higher risk for liver failure and liver cancer. They can transmit the infection to their sexual partner.	Hepatitis C can be serious for some persons but not for others. Most people who get the virus carry it for the rest of their lives. People who have chronic HCV are at high risk for liver failure and liver cancer.
What treatment helps?	Avoid alcohol. It can worsen liver disease.  There is no specific treatment for HAV.	Most people fully recover  Avoid alcohol. It can worsen liver disease.  Those people with chronic hepatitis B must be evaluate every 6-12 months.	Avoid alcohol. It can worsen liver disease.  Get vaccinated against Hepatitis A and hepatitis B.  Limited treatment
How is it prevented?	Always wash hands with soap and water after using the toilet and before handling food.  If you are at risk, receive the Hepatitis A vaccine, especially if traveling to an area where Hepatitis A is common, such as developing countries.	Get vaccinated. Hepatitis B vaccine is the best protection.  Encourage sexual partner and friends to get vaccinated.	There is no vaccine for Hepatitis C but get vaccinated against Hepatitis A and B.
		The surest way to prevent spread of any disease by sex is not to have sex at all, but if you choose to be sexually active, proper use of latex condoms may reduce spread.  Don't shoot drugs; if you can't stop never share needles, water or “works.”  Don't share anything that might have blood on it, such as razors, toothbrushes. or washcloths  Think about the health risk of getting a tattoo or piercing; tools or the artist can be contaminated.	