



Hepatitis A Tool Kit for LTCH/RH/CLS RVH IPAC Hub

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WHAT IS HEPATITIS A

Hepatitis A is a vaccine preventable liver infection (inflammation of the liver) that is caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV). HAV is very contagious.

Unlike hepatitis B and C, HAV does not cause chronic liver disease. However, the symptoms can range from mild to severe and in rare instances, acute liver failure which can be fatal.

Did you Know?

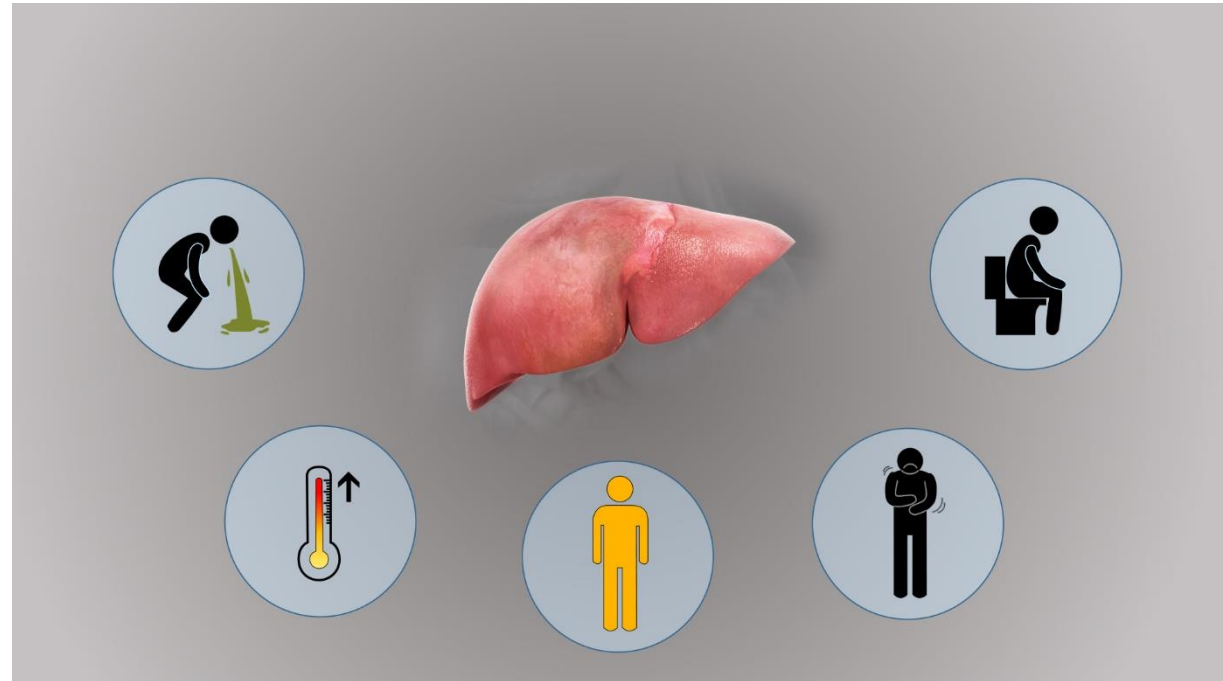
World Health Organization (WHO) estimates an annual total of 1.5 million cases of hepatitis A worldwide.



SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of HAV range from mild to severe and not everyone who is infected will have all the symptoms listed below:

- Fever
- Malaise
- Loss of appetite
- Diarrhea
- Nausea and vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Dark coloured urine and pale stools
- Jaundice (a yellowing of the eyes and skin).



The incubation period of hepatitis A is usually 14–28 days. Adults have signs and symptoms of illness more often than children. The severity of disease and fatal outcomes are higher in older age groups.

RISK FACTORS

Anyone who has not been vaccinated or previously infected with HAV can be at risk. Risk factors include:

- Poor sanitation
- Lack of clean water
- Living in a household with an infected person
- Sexual partner of someone with HAV
- Use of recreational drugs;
- Sex between men
- Travelling to areas where HAV is endemic without being immunized.



HEPATITIS A TRANSMISSION

HAV is spread from person to person through contact with infected feces (stool) directly (i.e. changing a diaper) or indirectly (contaminated food/water). Transmission of HAV can occur through the following:

- A contaminated food handler
- Improper hygiene (hand washing) after using the washroom
- Contamination during harvest, manufacturing and processing
- Sexual contact with someone who has HAV



Common food sources of HAV can include contaminated water, raw or undercooked shellfish and raw fruits and vegetables.

TREATMENT

There is no specific treatment for hepatitis A. Recovery from symptoms following infection can be slow and take several weeks or months. It is important to avoid unnecessary medications while recovering.

Hospitalization is not generally necessary in the absence of acute liver failure. Treatment is aimed at maintaining comfort and adequate nutritional balance, including replacement of fluids that are lost from vomiting and diarrhea.

VACCINATION FOR HEPATITIS A

Why?

HA occurs worldwide and is one of the most common vaccine-preventable diseases in travelers. About 25% of adult HA cases require hospitalization.

Who?

Pre-exposure immunization is recommended for people at increased risk of infection or severe HA including:

Individuals with chronic liver disease

Men who have sex with men (MSM)

Injectable and non-injectable illicit drug users

Individuals living/visiting HAV endemic or risk areas

Military personnel and humanitarian relief workers

Zoo-keepers, veterinarians and researchers who handle primates

What?

Pre-exposure HA immunization is at least 90% to 97% effective.



PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

ORGANISM/ DISEASE	CATEGORY *	TYPE OF PRECAUTION	SINGLE ROOM?	DURATION OF PRECAUTIONS	COMMENTS
HEPATITIS, VIRAL Hepatitis A & E	Adult	RP	No		Reportable Disease
	Paediatric* and incontinent or non- compliant adult	Contact	Yes	Duration of precautions: < 3years: duration of hospital stay > 3years: one week from symptoms onset	

- Point-of-care **risk assessment, hand hygiene**
- Safe handling of soiled linen and safe disposal of sharps
- Use appropriate PPE for blood/body fluid risk or exposure (gloves, fluid resistant gown, eye/face protection)
- Get vaccinated if at risk and not yet immunized (Hep A).

CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

- 1:10 dilution of household bleach can be used for disinfecting blood spills and dried blood **after** the surface is cleaned. Recommended contact time is 10 minutes.
- Accelerated hydrogen peroxide (AHP) one-step cleaning and disinfectant wipes (0.5%) with general contact time of 1 minute.
- Quats (quaternary ammonium compounds) wipes can kill with a contact time of usually 4-5 minutes depending on the product used.



SURVEILLANCE AND REPORTING

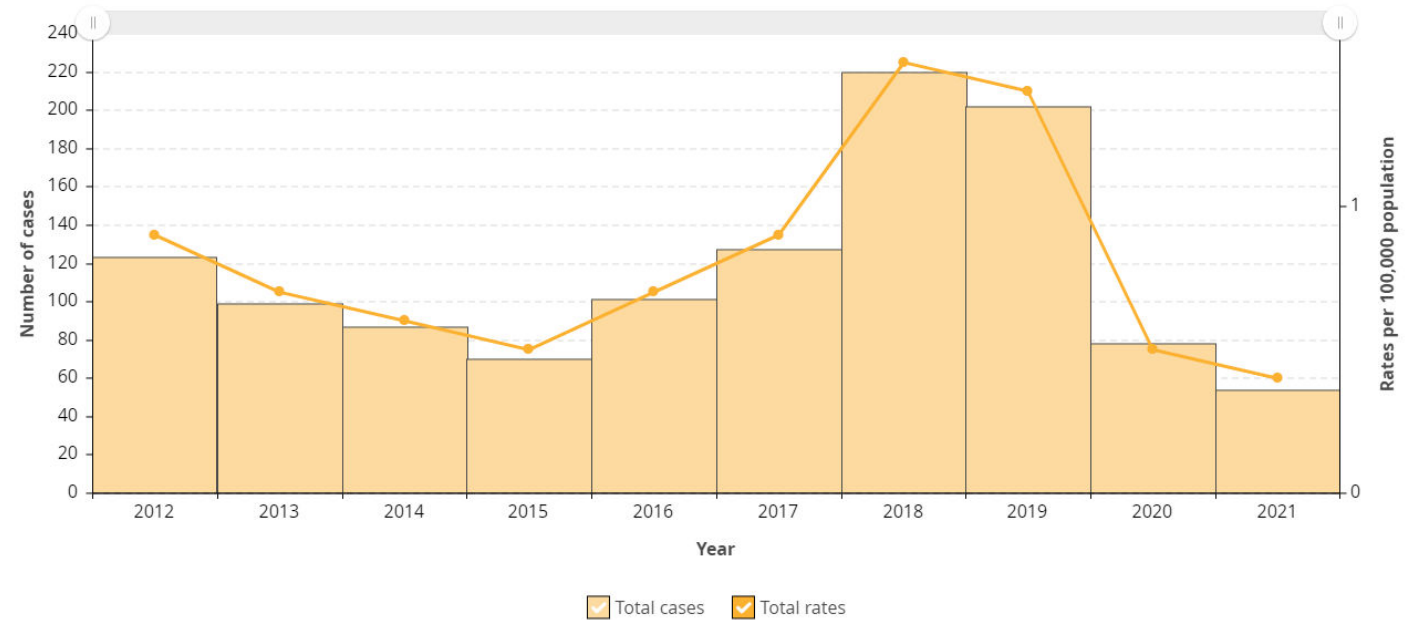
All cases of Hepatitis A virus are reportable to the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU).

Timely reporting of *Diseases of Public Health Significance* is mandated and essential for their control.

Visit SMDHU website for a list of reportable diseases/organisms

[Disease of Public Health Significance \(simcoemuskokahealth.org\)](http://simcoemuskokahealth.org)

Hepatitis A rates and cases for all ages, for all sexes, in Ontario



To see information on source data, classifications, citations, definitions and more, see the Infectious Disease Trends in Ontario, 2021: Technical notes <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ido-technical-notes.pdf>

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QUESTIONS

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