

This leaflet gives general advice. For further information please ask either the nursing or medical staff who are providing your care and treatment or contact the Infection Prevention and Control Team on 01386 502552.

If you would like this leaflet in a different language, larger print size, in audio, Braille or any other format please contact the

PALS team by phone on

☎ 01905 760020;

by letter ✉ Communications,  
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Worcestershire  
Health and Care  
NHS Trust



## HEPATITIS A

*What is it?*

*Your questions answered*

**An Information Leaflet  
for  
Patients and Staff**

## WHAT IS IT?

Hepatitis A is an infectious viral disease which causes inflammation of the liver (Yellow Jaundice). It occurs most often in school children and young adults. It is also known as infectious hepatitis. It is a different disease from Hepatitis B.

## HOW DO YOU KNOW IF SOMEONE HAS IT?

Often there are few or no symptoms in young children. The illness usually begins with a sudden onset of fever, feeling unwell, loss of appetite, feelings of sickness and stomach pain which is followed within a few days by jaundice (a yellow discoloration of the whites of the eyes and often the skin).

## IS IT INFECTIOUS?

Yes, the infection is most commonly spread from person to person by infected faeces (stools/motions), occasionally eating contaminated food may be the cause. The faeces can be infectious for two weeks before the person becomes ill and for about a week after the jaundice appears.

## WHAT IS THE INCUBATION PERIOD?

Illness may appear between 2-6 weeks after contact with an infected person.

## IS THERE ANY TREATMENT?

There is no specific treatment for Hepatitis A. Rest is all that is normally required.

## IS THERE A VACCINE?

Yes, but this is usually recommended for those who travel to countries where Hepatitis A is common or for those who may be at higher risk of getting this disease.

## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF SOMEONE HAS THE ILLNESS?

Seek advice from the GP. Close contacts can be protected from severe infection by immunisation (if the vaccine is given within 2 weeks of exposure).

Make sure there is very strict personal hygiene. Hands must be washed thoroughly after using the toilet, changing nappies and before handling food. Toilets, flush handles and seats must be kept clean and wiped over with a Milton 1% solution.

Towels must not be shared. Disposable paper hand towels must be available for use by staff and clients in hospital/care type settings.

## HOW SOON CAN THE PERSON RETURN TO WORK/THE CARE SETTING?

A person should stay away until they feel well and for at least 7 days after the onset of jaundice.

Children who are at home should not play out whilst they are still infectious.

