

HEPATITIS A

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Causative organism	<i>Hepatitis A virus</i> Note: hepatitis A is transmitted by the faecal-oral route. This may be food- or water-borne or via sexual contact, particularly between unvaccinated gay and bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM) and trans feminine.
Incubation period	15-50 days (mean 28 days)
How far back to trace	50 days from onset of symptoms
Usual testing method	Serology for hepatitis A (Hepatitis A IgM positive)
Common symptoms	Acute hepatitis with jaundice, malaise, abdominal pain, dark urine
Likelihood of transmission per act of condomless intercourse	Probably high if any faecal contamination of mouth
Likelihood of long-term sexual partner being infected	High, if susceptible
Protective effect of condoms	Nil (transmission is faecal-oral)
Transmission by oral sex	Possible if faecal contamination is present
Duration of potential infectivity	Two weeks before the onset of prodromal symptoms to either one week after the onset of jaundice (if it occurs), OR two weeks after the onset of prodromal symptoms (if jaundice does not occur).
Important sequelae	Rarely, severe hepatitis and acute liver failure
Direct benefit of detection and treatment of contacts	Vaccination and prophylaxis for contacts. Reduced family and community transmission.
Usual management of contacts	Post-exposure prophylaxis using hepatitis A vaccine or normal human immunoglobulin (NHIG) (passive immunisation) can be used to prevent secondary cases in close contacts of hepatitis A cases. Healthy contacts aged 1-40 years use monovalent hepatitis A vaccine. Contacts aged over 40 years or immunosuppressed give NHIG and vaccine. Contacts aged <1 give NHIG. Other groups see: Hepatitis A National Guidelines for Public Health Units 2018 The Australian Immunisation Handbook
Contact tracing priority	High including sexual contacts, domestic contacts, close social contacts, and food handlers
Notification	Acute viral hepatitis A is notifiable by all doctors and laboratories in all Australian states and territories, and New Zealand. If locally acquired, telephone a public health unit within 24 hours

References

Hepatitis A National Guidelines for Public Health 2018 <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/hepatitis-a-national-guidelines-for-public-health-units>

Page last updated September 2022



Developing a sustainable HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Workforce

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