

# Hepatitis A:

## Information for Schools and Parents

### What is Hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a highly contagious liver infection caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV). After an individual is infected with HAV, it can take 15-50 days before symptoms appear.

### Nationwide Hepatitis A Outbreak



Since 2017, several states across the U.S. have declared an outbreak of HAV.



Since January 2018 West Virginia has seen an increase in HAV cases. Several cases have been linked to the nationwide outbreak.

### Hepatitis A Symptoms

Jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes) • Fever • Loss of Appetite • Nausea • Vomiting • Abdominal pain • Gray-colored bowel movements • Dark Urine

**Note: Children younger than 6 years usually have few or no signs or symptoms**

### How is Hepatitis A spread?

HAV is spread through contact with feces of infected persons. This generally involves an infected child contaminating his/her own fingers, then touching an object. When another child touches that object and puts his/her fingers into her mouth or the mouth of another child, they then can become infected with HAV.

### Hepatitis A Prevention

#### VACCINATION

- Hepatitis A vaccination is the most effective way to prevent HAV infection
- Hepatitis A vaccine is a recommended immunization for all children 12 months and older
- Children who have not had a 2-dose hepatitis A vaccine are encouraged to get vaccinated

#### HAND HYGIENE

Apart from vaccination, the best way to prevent HAV infection is to practice good hand hygiene. Hands should be washed with soap and running water:

- Before preparing or eating food
- After using the restroom
- After diaper changing
- Whenever they are visibly dirty

Note: Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are not effective at killing HAV

**If you or your child start showing symptoms of HAV, see your primary care provider as soon as possible.**

### For More Information, visit:

- [dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/viral-hepatitis/pages/hepA\\_outbreak.aspx](http://dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/viral-hepatitis/pages/hepA_outbreak.aspx)
- [www.cdc.gov/hepatitis](http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis)
- Your local health department:  
[www.dhhr.wv.gov/localhealth/](http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/localhealth/)

Reference: Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools: A Quick Reference Guide, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition