

HEPATITIS:	A	B	C
What is it?	A liver illness caused by hep A virus. The virus makes people sick but only for 1-3 weeks.	A liver illness caused by hep B virus. The virus affects people differently. Most adults clear their infection and have no further problems. Many babies and children don't clear it and may have liver problems later in life.	A liver illness caused by hep C virus. Most people don't clear the virus and have the illness for life. The illness can cause liver problems.
Window period (the time between infection and the illness showing in blood tests)	Blood tests usually not given due to the short nature of illness.	On average, 8 weeks.	On average, 11 weeks.
Transmitted by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Food or water contaminated with sewerage. ▪ Anything with human faeces (poo) on it that comes in contact with the mouth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Blood-to-blood contact (when one person's blood gets into another person's bloodstream). ▪ Sexual contact. ▪ HCV+ mother to baby. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Blood-to-blood contact (see left). ▪ HCV+ Mother to baby (5%).
Behaviours which put people at risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Household contact with an infected person. ▪ Sexual contact (involving anal sex) with an infected person. ▪ Travelling through developing countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sexual contact with an infected person. ▪ Sharing any equipment when injecting drugs. ▪ A needle-stick injury. ▪ Tattooing or body piercing with contaminated equipment. ▪ Unsterile medical procedures in developing countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sharing any equipment when injecting drugs. ▪ Receiving blood products before February 1990 in Australia. ▪ A needle-stick injury. ▪ Tattooing or body piercing with contaminated equipment. ▪ Unsterile medical procedures.
Symptoms in short term infection	Feeling unwell, aches and pains, fever, nausea, lack of appetite, abdominal pain, dark urine, followed by <i>jaundice</i> (yellowing of eyes and sometimes skin). Young children usually have no symptoms.	Often no symptoms, but if they do present, they include <i>jaundice</i> (see left), dark urine, fatigue, abdominal pain, loss of appetite, nausea and joint pain.	Often no symptoms, but if they do present, are like having a mild flu. A small number of people may have symptoms similar to hep B (see left).
Symptoms in long term infection	No long term infection.	Fatigue, nausea, muscle aches and pains, abdominal discomfort or <i>jaundice</i> (see above left).	Fatigue, nausea, muscle aches and pains or abdominal discomfort.
Treatment	There are no specific medicines to cure infection with hepatitis A. Most people require no treatment except to relieve symptoms.	Adefovir, entecavir, pegylated interferon, lamivudine and telbivudine. Some people use Complementary medicine (eg. Herbs) to manage their symptoms.	Combination therapy with pegylated interferon and ribavirin. Some people use Complementary medicine (eg. Herbs) to manage their symptoms.
Vaccine	Yes. It is safe and effective.	Yes. It is safe and effective. Part of universal childhood vaccination.	None available.
Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Get vaccinated. ▪ Household contacts and sexual partners of someone with hep A should have an injection of <i>immunoglobulin</i> (drug that provides immediate short-term protection against particular diseases). ▪ Wash hands after going to the toilet and before eating. ▪ Practice safe sex. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Get vaccinated. ▪ Do not share needles and syringes when injecting drugs. ▪ Do not share other equipment when injecting drugs. ▪ Avoid other blood-to-blood contact. ▪ Practice safe sex. ▪ Newborn babies should be given an injection of <i>immunoglobulin</i> (see left) within 12 hours of birth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not share needles and syringes when injecting drugs. ▪ Do not share other equipment when injecting drugs. ▪ Avoid other blood-to-blood contact.