

# Get the Facts: Hepatitis A

## Food Handlers

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### What is hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a liver infection caused by the Hepatitis A virus. Highly contagious, the Hepatitis A virus is usually transmitted by the fecal-oral route, either through person-to-person contact or consumption of contaminated food or water. Contamination can occur when infected persons do not wash their hands properly after going to the bathroom and then touch other objects or food items. Surfaces that are frequently touched should be cleaned and sanitized often. An infected person can infect others up to two weeks before they feel sick, and sometimes up to a week after they feel better.

### Symptoms:

- Jaundice (yellowing skin and whites of eyes)
- Diarrhea
- Loss of appetite
- Stomach pain
- Fever
- Pale or clay colored stool (poop)
- Fatigue/tired
- Nausea & vomiting
- Dark colored urine

### How do I prevent the spread of illness?

- Do not touch ready-to-eat foods with your bare hands
- If you are sick with symptoms, DO NOT GO TO WORK. See your doctor immediately
- Remember - Alcohol hand sanitizers do not kill the hepatitis A virus
- Follow all safe food handling requirements, including handwashing with warm, soapy water for 20 seconds, in any of the following instances:
  - o Immediately before preparing food or working with non-prepackaged food, clean equipment and utensils, including take out containers or utensils
  - o After touching bare human body parts other than clean hands and clean, exposed portions of arms.
  - o After using the restroom
  - o After handling dirty equipment or utensils
  - o When switching between working with raw food and working with ready-to-eat food
  - o After coughing, sneezing, using a handkerchief or disposable tissue, using tobacco, eating or drinking
  - o Before putting on disposable gloves to start working with food
  - o During food preparation, as often as necessary to remove dirt and contamination; and when changing jobs, to prevent cross-contamination
  - o Before dispensing or serving food, or handling clean tableware and serving utensils in the food service area

### Where can volunteers get more information about hepatitis A?

Talk to your doctor, call 311 or visit [cityofchicago.org/hepatitisA](http://cityofchicago.org/hepatitisA)