

What is **hepatitis**?

Hepatitis is an inflammatory disease that affects the liver and may result from different causes.

Viral hepatitis is the most common type; the best-known types are hepatitis **A, B, C, and D**. These viruses can cause an acute (short-term) or chronic (long-term) infection.

The characteristics of each type of viral hepatitis differ, as do their modes of transmission, but the symptoms are usually similar.

How is **viral hepatitis** transmitted?

Hepatitis A is transmitted through food and water contaminated by the feces of a person with the virus.

Hepatitis B, C, and D are transmitted through direct contact with the blood of a person with the infection. Having unprotected sex is also a risk factor for contracting **hepatitis B and C**.

Sharing syringes or other equipment used to consume drugs or other substances, and using unsterilized needles for tattoos, are among the most common modes of **hepatitis C** transmission.



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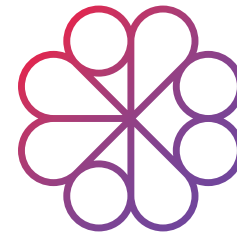
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Hepatitis

General Symptoms of **Viral Hepatitis**

Some people with the hepatitis virus do not have symptoms and will only know they have the condition by undergoing **blood tests** to detect the different types. If symptoms occur, they may include:

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Dark urine
- Loss of appetite
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes)
- Joint pain

A chronic hepatitis virus infection can cause **liver failure, cirrhosis, and liver cancer**. Early diagnosis and treatment can help prevent these complications.

Only a small number of **hepatitis B** cases in adults, some involving **hepatitis D** coinfection, become chronic (**hepatitis D** does not occur on its own; it occurs only as a coinfection with **hepatitis B**). In most cases, the **hepatitis C** virus causes chronic hepatitis, and acute **hepatitis C** can become chronic.

How can **hepatitis** be prevented?

For **hepatitis A and B**, there are safe and effective **vaccines** available to prevent people from contracting these viruses. Good hygiene and handwashing help prevent infection with the **hepatitis A** virus.

Required Doses by Type

Hepatitis A



at 6 months

Hepatitis B



between 1-2 months



between 4-6 months

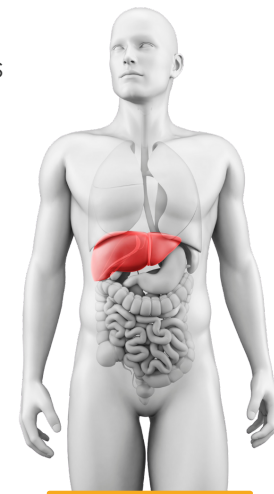
Avoiding the sharing of syringes during drug use, ensuring that tattooing equipment is sterile and new ink is used, using protection during sexual activity, and not sharing personal items such as toothbrushes, razors, or nail clippers are ways to prevent the transmission of **hepatitis B and C**.

How can **hepatitis** be treated?

Hepatitis C is curable; medications are available that can cure a person in as little as 12 weeks. Therefore, it is important to follow your doctor's recommendations throughout treatment, both when taking the medications and attending follow-up appointments.

A person can become infected with the **hepatitis C** virus again, so it is important to know how to prevent it.

Treatment for **hepatitis A and B** can be as simple as rest if the person has only an acute infection. Otherwise, antiviral medications may be required.



Reference
{ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). Viral Hepatitis. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/abc/index.htm>
MedlinePlus. (2020). What is Hepatitis?. Retrieved from: <https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/hepatitis.html> }