



Hepatitis A

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Key facts

Transmission

- Unwashed hands
- Food or water contaminated by waste from people
- Unwashed fruits and vegetables/food washed or prepared with contaminated water
- Close physical contact (such as oral-anal sex) with a sick person (not passed through casual contact)

Most vulnerable to severe consequences

- Adults often develop more severe symptoms than children

Symptoms

- Tiredness
- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Abdominal pain
- Nausea
- Dark urine
- Yellowing of the skin and/or mucosae (jaundice)

**** Many people (especially children) show no symptoms, even though they are infected and can spread the disease ****

What can you do to prevent and control an epidemic?

Monitoring the community and identifying sick people

- Identify sick people in the community

Treatment and management

- Refer symptomatic cases to health facilities
- Provide psychosocial support to the sick person and their family members

Sanitation and waste management

- Promote use of appropriate sanitation and waste facilities (toilets/latrines)
 - No open defecation

Hand hygiene

- Promote good hand hygiene (handwashing with soap)
 - BEFORE: preparing food; eating; feeding a child; treating wounds; or caring for sick people
 - AFTER: using the toilet or cleaning a baby; touching garbage or waste; touching or feeding animals; blowing nose, coughing, or sneezing; treating wounds; or caring for sick people

Food and water hygiene and safety

- Encourage household water treatment for safe drinking water
 - Store water in clean, covered water container
- Promote thorough cleaning, cooking, and storage of food
 - Cover and store food safely (protected from insect/animal contamination)
 - Use clean utensils and storage containers
- Encourage exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, and complementary breastfeeding until the age of two years (especially when a child is sick)

Social mobilization and health promotion

- Find out the specific advice being given by health and other relevant authorities
- Offer support and encouragement to follow the advice
 - Try to gain understanding about if and why health practice advice is not being followed
 - With the guidance of your supervisor and health authorities, work with communities to overcome barriers to following health advice and recommended practices

Immunization

- Support routine and mass vaccination campaigns

Mapping and community assessment

1. Make a map of the community.
2. Mark the following information on the map:
 - How many people have fallen sick with hepatitis A? Where?
 - How many people have died? Where? When?
 - Who and where are the vulnerable people?
 - Where are the local health facilities and services? (include traditional healers)
 - Where do people obtain their drinking water?
3. Record the following information on the back of the map:
 - When did people start to fall sick with hepatitis A?
 - How many people live in the affected community? How many are children under five years?
 - Is breastfeeding common?
 - Is the water source safe?
 - Do people treat their drinking water?
 - How do they do it?
 - What sanitation facilities are available? (put communal toilets/latrines on map)
 - Do people use them?
 - What handwashing facilities are available? (put communal handwashing stations on map)
 - Do they have soap?
 - What are the community's habits, practices and beliefs about caring for and feeding sick people? Consider any differences in roles and responsibilities between men and women.
 - When babies and infants are sick, do women continue to breastfeed them?
 - Is a social mobilization or health promotion programme in place?
 - Is a vaccination programme planned or in place?
 - What are the habits, practices and beliefs about hygiene, sanitation and water?
 - What are the barriers people face in accessing water points and sanitation and hygiene facilities, of

all gender identities, ages, disabilities and backgrounds

- Which sources do people use/trust the most for information?
 - Are there rumours or misinformation about Hepatitis A? What are the rumours?