

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A (HAV) is a viral infection of the liver characterized by malaise, fever, nausea, vomiting and jaundice. In some people, they do not have any signs or symptoms of the disease. The elderly are more likely to have symptoms than children.

The incubation period for HAV is usually 15-50 days (average 28). It usually does not last longer than 2 months, although 10-15% of symptomatic patients have signs and symptoms for as long as 6 months.

HAV infection results in lifelong immunity.



How does it spread?

Transmission is primarily via person-to-person contact, generally through faecal contamination and oral ingestion.

It can be spread through contaminated food such as fruits, uncooked vegetables, shellfish, ice and water.

Transmission is facilitated by poor personal hygiene, poor sanitation and intimate (intra-household or sexual) contact.

How can it be prevented?

By good personal and food hygiene:

- always wash your hands before preparing food, before meals and after going to toilet
- avoid drinking contaminated water or beverages with ice of doubtful origin, eating uncooked or undercooked food, particularly shellfish and eating cut or peeled fruits

These measures can also effectively prevent other infectious food borne illnesses, such as cholera and travellers' diarrhoea.

By Vaccination

Vaccination is recommended for all susceptible persons travelling to or working in countries with an intermediate or high endemicity of HAV infection such as Hong Kong and South East Asia.

People who are one year of age or older can be administered in two doses six months apart.

A pre-vaccination blood test for antibodies against HAV is generally not required if an individual is aged 30 or below because of a low prevalence of the antibody in this age group.

Protection begins 4 weeks after the first dose, it is safe and does not cause serious side effects.

Current evidence suggests that the protection of a HAV vaccination lasts for at least 10 years and blood tests to assess antibody levels after vaccine are not recommended.

How is it treated?

There is no specific treatment available for HAV. Treatment is supportive.

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甲型肝炎

甲型肝炎(HAV)是一種肝臟的病毒感染疾病，其病徵包括疲倦、發燒、噁心、嘔吐及黃疸。部分甲型肝炎患者可能不會出現任何病徵及症狀，年老人士則較兒童更容易出現病徵。

甲型肝炎的潛伏期通常為15至50天(平均28天)，發病時間通常不會超過2個月，當中百分之十至十五有甲型肝炎病徵的患者會維持出現相關病徵和症狀長達6個月。

甲型肝炎患者將可終生對甲型肝炎免疫。



甲型肝炎如何傳播？

甲型肝炎主要通過人與人之間的接觸傳播，通常經由糞便污染和口腔感染。

另外，甲型肝炎也可能經由受污染的食物，如水果、未煮過的蔬菜、貝殼類海產、冰塊或水傳播。

個人衛生及環境衛生欠佳，以至親密接觸（如家庭成員之間的接觸或性接觸），都有利於傳播甲型肝炎。

如何預防甲型肝炎？

保持良好的個人和食物衛生：

- 準備食物前、進食前及如廁後都要洗手
- 避免飲用污水或來歷不明的加冰飲料，或進食未經徹底煮熟的食物，尤其是貝殼類海產及切開了或已去皮的水果

這些措施還可有效預防其他可傳染的食源性疾病(infectious food borne illnesses)，如霍亂和旅行者腹瀉。

接種疫苗

所有前往甲型肝炎中度或高度流行地區的旅遊或工作的高危人士都應該接種疫苗，這些地方包括香港及東南亞等。

甲型肝炎疫苗適用於一歲或以上的人士，並須分開兩次注射，兩次注射之間須隔六個月。

年屆30歲或以下的人士不需要在接種甲型肝炎疫苗前檢驗血液。

甲型肝炎疫苗的保護期於第一次接種疫苗後4周開始。該疫苗注射是安全的，不會引起嚴重的副作用。

目前的醫學證據顯示，甲型肝炎疫苗的保護期至少維持10年，並且不建議在疫苗注射後進行血液測試以評估體內抗體的水平。

如何治療？

現時主要是支持性治療，目前還沒有特別的治療方法。

撰寫：

明德國際醫院醫療營運部

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