

# Hepatitis



## WHAT IS IT?

**Hepatitis** is an inflammation of the liver, commonly caused by a virus, but it may also be linked to certain drugs, toxins, or alcohol. Viral infections are known as Hepatitis (Hep) A, B, C, D, and E, with each caused by a different virus.

**Hep A** had been linked most often with food or water contaminated with feces from an infected person. It is now thought to be more efficiently transmitted person to person.

**Hep B, C & D** are chronic diseases typically linked to contact with infectious bodily fluids (e.g., blood) and can occur via shared needles or sexual contact.

**Hep E** is primarily waterborne and not common in the US.

## WHY SHOULD I CARE?

- Estimated new US infections/2018  
**24,900** Hep A; **21,600** Hep B; **50,300** Hep C
- Estimated US chronic infections/2020  
**850,000** Hep B; **2.4 million** Hep C

Additionally:

- Those infected with **Hep A** usually recover.
- **Hep B, C, and D** infections can progress to serious health problems including liver cirrhosis, cancer, and death.
- If eaten raw, filter-feeding shellfish (e.g., **oysters**) raised in sewage-contaminated water can cause hepatitis.

## SIGNS & SYMPTOMS



## WHAT DO I DO ABOUT IT?

1. Exclude infected food handlers from handling food.
2. Ensure food handlers wash hands properly before meal preparation, particularly after toileting.
3. Ensure proper sanitation and access to safe water.
4. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces in public restrooms; using a product with a Hep A claim may be beneficial.
5. If a bodily fluid incident occurs, respond quickly to contain it, disinfect the spill and appropriate surrounding areas, and exclude anyone from the area.
6. Antiviral drugs & immunoglobulins may be given after exposure, as advised by medical professionals.
7. Consider vaccination, where possible, as a preventive approach. Vaccines are available against Hep A and B; the Hep B vaccine also protects against Hep D.

***TAG Public Health Experts have the experience and expertise to help companies and institutions successfully integrate science-driven public health approaches into their business strategy.***