

Transmission

- Unwashed hands, objects contaminated with human waste (stools)
- Food and water contaminated with human waste (focus especially on fruits, raw vegetables, cold meat, raw shellfish and ice)
- Close physical contact with an infectious person (not casual everyday contact)

Symptoms

- Some people with Hepatitis A, especially children, do not show signs of disease at all.
- Symptoms can include tiredness, fever, loss of appetite, stomach pain, nausea, dark urine, and yellowing of the skin or whites of the eyes (jaundice).

Prevention

- Handwashing with soap (especially after using the toilet or cleaning a baby)
- Safe, clean drinking water (including a clean, covered water container in the household)
- Use of appropriate sanitation facilities (sound, clean latrines)
- Good food hygiene (thoroughly cooked food, covered food, clean utensils, etc.)
- Social mobilization and behaviour change communication
- Routine vaccination

Vulnerable people

- Older children and adults
- People living in areas that have poor water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and services
- People who live in crowded conditions

If an epidemic occurs

- Detect and refer cases to health facilities.
- Promote handwashing with soap (especially after using the toilet or cleaning a baby)
- Promote safe, clean drinking water (including a clean, covered water container in the household)
- Promote use of appropriate sanitation facilities (sound, clean latrines)
- Promote good food hygiene (thoroughly cooked food, covered food, clean utensils, etc.)
- Increase social mobilization and behaviour change communication
- Support mass vaccination campaign
- Promote recommended health practices

Community-based assessment - questions

Make a map of the community and mark the information you gather on the map. Record other details.

- When did people start to fall sick with hepatitis A?
- How many people have fallen sick with hepatitis A? Where?
- How many people have died from hepatitis A? Where?
- How many people live in the affected community or area? How many children under five years of age live in the area?
- Who and where are the vulnerable people?
- Are children in the affected community generally well nourished?
- Do people always have enough food?
- How common is breastfeeding?
- Where do people obtain their drinking water? Is the source safe? Do people treat their water?
- What sanitation facilities (including communal latrines) are available? Do people use them?
- What hand-washing facilities are available? Do they have soap?
- Where are the local health facilities and services? (Include traditional and community carers.)
- What are the community's habits, practices and beliefs about caring for and feeding sick people? When babies and infants are sick, do women continue to breastfeed them?
- Is a vaccination programme planned or in place?
- Is a social mobilization or health promotion programme in place?
- What are the community's habits, practices and beliefs about hygiene, sanitation and water?
- Which sources or channels of information do people use most?
- Are rumours or is misinformation about hepatitis A spreading in the community?
- Can people identify the signs and symptoms of dehydration?
- Do people know how to make oral rehydration solution (ORS)? Do they have resources at hand to make it?
- Do people know how to treat water?

Volunteer actions

See the following action tools for more information on what actions to take against hepatitis a:

- 1 - Community-based surveillance
- 2 - Community mapping
- 3 - Communicating with the community
- 4 - Referral to health facilities
- 5 - Volunteer protection and safety
- 12 - Managing fever
- 19 - Psychosocial support (Psychological first aid (PFA))
- 24 - Routine vaccinations
- 25 - Mass vaccination campaigns
- 29 - Hygiene promotion
- 30 - Clean, safe household water
- 31 - Good food hygiene
- 32 - Sanitation
- 33 - Building and maintaining latrines
- 34 - Handwashing with soap

