



GEORGIAN BAY WOMEN'S CLINIC

Hepatitis A: What You Should Know

What's Hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a liver infection caused by the Hepatitis A virus (HAV). It's usually spread through consuming food or water contaminated with the virus. Unlike other types of hepatitis, Hepatitis A doesn't cause long-term liver damage and is usually a short-term illness.

What Are the Symptoms?

Some people with Hepatitis A don't have symptoms, but when they do, they can include:

Early Symptoms

- Fatigue
- Sudden nausea and vomiting
- Abdominal pain or discomfort, especially on the upper right side beneath the lower ribs (by your liver)
- Clay-colored bowel movements
- Loss of appetite
- Low-grade fever

- Dark urine
- Joint pain

Later Symptoms

- Yellowing of the skin and the whites of your eyes (jaundice)
- Intense itching

How Can You Prevent It?

Get Vaccinated: The Hepatitis A vaccine is highly effective.

Practice Good Hygiene: Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water, especially after using the bathroom and before eating or preparing food.

Safe Food and Water: Be cautious about food and water when traveling to areas where Hepatitis A is common.

Avoid Raw and Uncooked Food: Be cautious with raw or undercooked shellfish and other potentially contaminated foods.

How Do You Get Tested?

Blood Test: Hepatitis A is diagnosed through a blood test that checks for antibodies against the virus.

How Is It Treated?

Rest: Your body needs time to heal.

Hydration: Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated, especially if you have nausea and vomiting.

Healthy Diet: Eat a balanced diet to help your liver recover.

Avoid Alcohol: Alcohol can worsen liver damage.

Medications: There are no specific medications for Hepatitis A. Treatment focuses on relieving symptoms.

Follow-Up

Monitor Symptoms: Keep track of your symptoms and follow up with your healthcare provider as advised.

Prevent Spread: Avoid preparing food for others while you're infected, and practice good hygiene to prevent spreading the virus.

Remember:

- Hepatitis A is usually a short-term illness, but it can be severe in some cases.
- The best way to prevent Hepatitis A is through vaccination and good hygiene practices.
- If you think you might have Hepatitis A, see your healthcare provider for testing and guidance.