

Hepatitis

What are the differences between Hepatitis A, B, and C?

Hepatitis A:

- Caused by the Hepatitis A virus, it can range in severity from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a severe illness lasting several months.
- Typically, it is spread when a person ingests fecal matter, even in microscopic amounts, from contact with objects, food, or drinks that have been contaminated, as well as during sex.
- In the United States, there were about 4,000 cases in 2016.
- There is a vaccine available to prevent hepatitis A.

Hepatitis B:

- Caused by the hepatitis B virus, it can range in severity from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a serious, lifelong illness.
- Hepatitis B virus is spread when blood, semen, or other body fluid infected with the virus enters the body of someone who is not infected.
- In the United States, it is estimated that anywhere from 850,000-2.2 million people have hepatitis B.
- There is a vaccine available to prevent hepatitis B.

Hepatitis C:

- Caused by the hepatitis C virus, it can range from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a serious, lifelong illness.
- Approximately 75-85% people living with Hepatitis C will develop a chronic infection, which, untreated, can be life threatening.
- Hepatitis C is spread when blood from a person living with Hepatitis C enters the body of someone who does not have it. Sharing needles, works or other equipment used to prepare and inject drugs is the most common way to get Hepatitis C.
- In 2016 in the United States, 2,967 cases were reported to the CDC, but the estimated number of new infections was 41,200.

There is no vaccine available for hepatitis C, but it can be treated.

What are the symptoms of Hepatitis A, B, and C?

People with new hepatitis infections usually do not have symptoms or have mild symptoms. When symptoms do occur, typically they include:

- Fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, diarrhea, clay-colored bowel movements, joint pain, and/or jaundice (yellow color in the skin or eyes).

Hepatitis is caused by a virus and leads to inflammation of the liver.

- The liver is a vital organ that processes nutrients, filters the blood, and fights infections.
- When the liver is inflamed or damaged, its function can be affected.
- The most common types of hepatitis are Hepatitis A, B, and C. There are vaccines available for Hepatitis A and B.
- Heavy alcohol use, toxins, some medications, and certain medical conditions can also cause hepatitis.
- Hepatitis is not an STD but can be transmitted sexually.