



Hepatitis A and Food Service Workers

What is Hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a serious liver infection that causes liver inflammation. It is transmitted through contact with an infected person's stool. This typically occurs via fecal-oral route. The infection can last for several weeks or it can last for several months.

What are the Symptoms?

There are multiple symptoms of a hepatitis A infection and those include.

- Fever
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin/eyes)
- Dark urine
- Light or clay colored stool
- Abdominal pain or diarrhea
- Vomiting/nausea.

Some people may have no symptoms at all.

At Risk Populations Recommended to Get Vaccinated

- Men who have sex with men
- Those experiencing homelessness
- Intravenous (IV) and non-IV drug users
- Those who are incarcerated
- Those infected with hepatitis C

Hepatitis A Connection with Food Service

The most common route for the hepatitis A virus to be transmitted is via fecal to oral. Because of this it is easily transferred through the contamination of food or water.

Why Preventing the Spread of Hepatitis A is Important in Food Service

An employee who is infected with the hepatitis A virus could potentially spread the virus to hundreds and even thousands of people by contaminating surfaces, utensils or food.

Ohio Food Service Laws on Those Showing Symptoms or Infected With Hepatitis A

The person in charge shall restrict the duties of a food employee with symptoms of hepatitis A.

The person in charge shall restrict the duties of a food employee or exclude a food employee diagnosed with hepatitis A until 10 days after the initial onset of symptoms.

Refer to Ohio Administrative Code 3717-1-02.1

How to Protect From Spreading Hepatitis A in a Food Service Setting

There are a couple of food safety measures people can take to prevent spreading germs through food.

- Wash hands thoroughly for 20-30 seconds after using the restroom. Hand sanitizer DOES NOT replace handwashing.
- Wash hands before starting to prepare any food even if one does not feel ill.
- Wear gloves when preparing ready-to-eat food.