

The National Association of Child Care Professionals (NACCP) is Leading the Way in the Fight Against Hepatitis A

Tip Sheet

Facts About Hepatitis A in Children:

- ★ People of all ages can get hepatitis A, but most cases happen in children under the age of 10.
- ★ Children easily pick up the disease because they often come into close contact with other children in child care and play settings.
- ★ About 75 percent of infected children show some symptoms of hepatitis A such as stomach upset, fever, diarrhea, tiredness and body aches.
- ★ Although children do not always show symptoms of the disease, they can have the infection and easily pass it on to adults, who could develop severe symptoms, liver disease and even death in rare cases.

General Facts About Hepatitis A:

- ★ Hepatitis A is a highly contagious virus that affects the liver. It is spread via the fecal-oral route (by putting something in the mouth, even though it may look clean, that has been contaminated with the stool of a person with hepatitis A) and through close person-to-person contact or by contaminated food or water.
- ★ Symptoms include fever, tiredness, loss of appetite, stomach upset and cramping, dark urine and jaundice (yellowing of the eyes and skin).
- ★ Up to 270,000 Americans get hepatitis A annually and approximately 100 people die from hepatitis A each year in the United States.

Facts About Prevention:

- ★ There is no cure for hepatitis A, but the disease can be prevented with a simple vaccination given in two doses. The first dose can be given starting at age two years or older and the next can be given six to 12 months later.
- ★ There are different types of hepatitis (including hepatitis A, hepatitis B and hepatitis C). While the hepatitis B vaccine series is routinely given to infants, the hepatitis A vaccine is only available to children starting at two years and older. Therefore, parents might not be aware that this is a vaccine their child has not received.
- ★ Good personal cleanliness can also help prevent hepatitis A. This includes washing one's hands after using the bathroom, after changing a diaper, and before eating or preparing food.

Statistics:

**According to a recent survey by the American Liver Foundation:*

- ★ Awareness of hepatitis A as a disease that children should be vaccinated against is very low. When asked what diseases their child should be vaccinated against, only three percent of parents mentioned hepatitis A.
- ★ Fifty-two percent of parents are concerned about their children contracting hepatitis A.
- ★ Of the parents aware of hepatitis A, less than half (46 percent) are aware of the hepatitis A vaccine.
- ★ Forty percent of parents do not know that you can die from hepatitis A.

About the NACCP

The goal of the National Association of Child Care Professionals (NACCP) is to improve, enhance and strengthen the credibility of the people who lead the child care industry. The NACCP is committed to providing healthy child care centers for children across the country. We hope these tips help to raise awareness among child care professionals and parents about the increased risks of hepatitis A in group settings, as well as the importance of vaccination as a preventive measure.

* For more information about the NACCP or to receive additional copies of this tip sheet, please visit www.NACCP.org or call 1-800-537-1118.

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