



Steritech®

FOODBORNE ILLNESS EDUCATION SERIES

HEPATITIS A

Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver. Although there are several types of hepatitis, hepatitis A is a very contagious foodborne pathogen that is caused by the hepatitis A virus. It is estimated that there are 3,000 new cases of hepatitis A in the U.S. each year. It is most frequently acquired from ingestion of food or water that was contaminated with the hepatitis A virus and through close physical contact with persons infected with the virus.

ABOUT HEPATITIS A

- Hepatitis A is a common cause of foodborne infection. Unlike other foodborne infections, there is a vaccine available.
- Fruits, vegetables, shellfish, ice, and water are the foods that are most likely to be contaminated by the hepatitis A virus.
- Hepatitis A can persist for months in an environment.

TRANSMISSION, SYMPTOMS & STATISTICS

- Hepatitis A is carried in the feces of infected persons and is most commonly spread when an infected person does not properly wash their hands after using the restroom and then touches food, a surface, or a person's mouth.
- The incubation period ranges from 14 to 50 days, with the 14 days before symptoms appear being the most contagious.
- Symptoms develop abruptly and include fever, feeling run down, lack of appetite, nausea, vomiting, pain on the right side of the abdomen, dark urine, light-colored stools, jaundice (yellow eyes and skin), and itchy skin. Severity of symptoms depends on age. Infected children under the age of 6 may not display any symptoms. Hepatitis A can result in death.
- The illness usually lasts for up to 2 months, but symptoms can last for up to 6 months.
- Once a person becomes infected with hepatitis A, it is not possible for them to become infected again.

KEEP YOUR OPERATIONS & CUSTOMERS SAFE

- Do not allow employees to work when they are ill with vomiting, diarrhea, or jaundice. Employees diagnosed with *Salmonella* of any kind, *Shigella*, Shiga Toxin-producing *E. coli*, hepatitis A, or norovirus should also be excluded.
- Immediately exclude employees displaying symptoms of jaundice if the jaundice developed within the last 7 days.
- Contact your corporate office to inform them of any employee who is displaying symptoms of jaundice.
- Contact your local public health agency to report the jaundiced employee and for advice on other actions.
- Follow-up on all customer claims of foodborne illness, and properly communicate any outbreak information to the local or state public health agency.
- Train all employees in proper handwashing techniques. Monitor to ensure proper execution.
- Strictly enforce no bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods within the food establishment.
- Use only approved food suppliers and distributors that can verify they monitor produce growers for Good Agricultural Practices. Purchase only from food processors that have HACCP and trace-back capabilities and have third-party audits to confirm they are in compliance with all federal and local regulations.

5 MUST-KNOW FACTS FOR LOCATION EMPLOYEES

- 1 Wash hands thoroughly, especially after using the restroom. Pay special attention to scrubbing fingernails, between fingers, and wrists.
- 2 Do not work while sick. Inform your manager immediately if you are diagnosed with hepatitis A.
- 3 Wash raw vegetables and produce before preparing or eating.
- 4 Wash hands, knives, cutting boards, and other food-contact areas after handling uncooked food, including produce and raw meat, fish and seafood, or poultry.
- 5 Thoroughly cook food to safe minimum internal temperatures: produce to 135°F; eggs for immediate service to 145°F or 155°F if not for immediate service; seafood, beef and pork to 145°F; rare steaks to 145°F on the surfaces with a color change at the surface, poultry to 165°F; and ground meats to 155°F.