PERSONS AT RISK OF INFECTION

» Household contacts of infected persons
» Persons, especially children, living in areas with increased rates of hepatitis A during the baseline period from 1987-1997.
» Persons traveling to countries where hepatitis A is common
» Caregivers
» Injecting and non-injecting drug users

VACCINE RECOMMENDATIONS
Vaccine is recommended for the following persons from 12 months of age and older:

» Travelers to areas with increased rates of hepatitis A
» Men who have sex with men
» Injecting and non-injecting drug users
» Persons with clotting-factor disorders (e.g. hemophilia)
» Persons with chronic liver disease
» Children living in areas with increased rates of hepatitis A during the baseline period from 1987-1997.

PREVENTION
Hepatitis A vaccine is the best protection. Short-term protection against hepatitis A is available from immune globulin. It can be given before and within two weeks after coming in contact with HAV.

Always wash your hands with soap and water after using the bathroom, changing a diaper and before preparing and eating food.
WHAT IS HEPATITIS A?
Hepatitis A is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV). Hepatitis A can affect anyone. In the United States, hepatitis A can occur in situations ranging from isolated cases of disease to widespread epidemics.

Good personal hygiene and proper sanitation can help prevent hepatitis A.

Vaccines are also available for long-term prevention of hepatitis A virus infection in persons 12 months of age and older. Immune globulin is available for short-term prevention of hepatitis A virus infection in individuals of all ages.

HOW IS HEPATITIS A VIRUS TRANSMITTED?
Hepatitis A virus is spread from person to person by putting something in the mouth that has been contaminated with the stool of a person with hepatitis A. This type of transmission is called “fecal-oral.”

For this reason, the virus is more easily spread in areas where there are poor sanitary conditions or where good personal hygiene is not observed. Most infections result from contact with a household member or sex partner who has hepatitis A.

Casual contact, as in the usual office, factory or school setting, does not spread the virus.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU HAVE HEPATITIS A?
A blood test (IgM anti-HAV) is needed to diagnose hepatitis A. Talk to your doctor or someone from your local health department if you suspect that you have been exposed to hepatitis A or any type of viral hepatitis.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS
Adults will have signs and symptoms more often than children.
» Jaundice 
» Nausea
» Fatigue 
» Diarrhea
» Abdominal pain 
» Fever
» Loss of appetite

LONG-TERM EFFECTS
» There is no chronic (long-term) infection. Once you have had hepatitis A you cannot get it again.
» About 15 percent of people infected with HAV will have prolonged or relapsing symptoms over a six-nine month period.

IF YOU’VE HAD HEPATITIS A IN THE PAST, CAN YOU GET IT AGAIN?
No. Once you recover from hepatitis A you develop antibodies that provide lifelong protection from future infections. After recovering from hepatitis A, you will never get it again and you cannot transmit the virus to others.

SPECIAL RISKS
The American Liver Foundation recognizes other groups for which HAV infection may pose a special risk. These include groups historically associated with common source outbreaks and persons with regular or increased risk for exposure to fecal material:
» Food handlers
» Military personnel
» Day care personnel and children attending day care, as well as their parents, siblings and close contacts
» Health care workers
» Staff of institutions for the developmentally disabled
» Consumers of certain high-risk foods (e.g. raw shellfish)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis A Cases</td>
<td>Cases</td>
<td>Rate per 100,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spokane Co.</td>
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<tr>
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*Per 100,000 population.