

WHAT IS HAPPENING?

There is an outbreak of **hepatitis A**, mostly among gay and bisexual men.



Public Health
England

IT
STARTS
WITH
ME

For more information visit:
www.nhs.uk/hepa

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**THE FACTS
ABOUT
HEPATITIS A.**

WHAT IS HEPATITIS A?

Hepatitis A is inflammation of the liver – caused by a viral infection. It is mainly spread through contaminated food, poor hand washing or sex.

During sex it is mainly passed on when licking skin, condoms or sex toys which have faeces (poo) on them. This could include licking skin near the anus (rimming), buttocks, groin or penis (giving oral sex after anal sex).

Gay and bisexual men with multiple partners are particularly at risk.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Symptoms for hepatitis A are rarely life-threatening. They can be so mild that people may not realise they have it. But weeks after infection it can cause:

- mild flu-like symptoms
- diarrhoea
- itchy skin
- jaundice, meaning your skin and the whites of your eyes turn yellow, your urine is dark and your faeces (poo) are pale.
- nausea
- extreme tiredness
- stomach pain

HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF?

You can avoid getting hepatitis A by:

- Washing your hands after sex (ideally buttocks, groin and penis too).
- Changing condoms between anal and oral sex.

- Covering anything which is shared during sex with a fresh condom or fresh latex glove for each new person.
- Using a latex barrier (eg, a condom cut into a square) for rimming.
- Using latex gloves for fingering or fisting.
- Not sharing sex toys.

There is also a vaccination against hepatitis A – ask about this at your next sexual health clinic appointment.

HOW IS IT TREATED?

There is no specific treatment for hepatitis A. Your body will clear the infection but this can take several months. Once you clear the infection, you're immune and cannot get it again – but you can get other types of hepatitis.

If you think you might have hepatitis A, or have any questions, visit a sexual health clinic.