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# Disease Fact Sheet

**Hepatitis A** is an acute liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV), lasting from a few weeks to several months. It does not lead to chronic infection but it can affect anyone..
**Transmission:** Ingestion of fecal matter, even in microscopic amounts, from close person-to-person contact or ingestion of contaminated food or drinks.
**Vaccination:** Hepatitis A vaccination is recommended for all children starting at age 1 year, travelers to certain countries, and others at risk.
**A vaccination does exist for hepatitis A but a cure does NOT.**

**Hepatitis B** is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV) the most contagious of the hepatitis viruses. It ranges in severity from a mild illness, lasting a few weeks (acute), to a serious long-term (chronic) illness that can lead to cirrhosis, liver disease, liver cancer, liver failure, and death. It is believed that under some circumstances hepatitis B can survive and be transmittable from 10 days to 2 months in dried blood.
**Transmission:** Contact with infectious blood and other body fluids from having sex with an infected person, sharing contaminated needles to inject drugs, or from an infected mother to her newborn.
**Vaccination:** Hepatitis B vaccination is recommended for all infants, older children and adolescents who were not vaccinated previously, and adults at risk for HBV infection. This vaccination series includes three injections over a six-month period.
**A vaccination does exist for hepatitis B but a cure does NOT.**

**Hepatitis C** is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis C virus (HCV) discovered in 1988 and runs rampant among drug users. HCV infection sometimes results in an acute illness, but most often becomes a chronic condition that can lead to cirrhosis of the liver and liver cancer. Approximately one quarter of HIV (human immunodeficiency virus)-infected persons in the United States are also infected with the hepatitis C virus (HCV). HCV infection may also impact the course and management of HIV infection.
**Transmission:** Contact with the blood of an infected person, primarily through sharing contaminated needles.
**There is no vaccine or cure for hepatitis C.**

**Hepatitis D, Hepatitis E, Hepatitis F, Hepatitis G** are all liver diseases caused by different viruses. Very little is known about these three except that hepatitis D requires that the infected person also be infected with hepatitis B; otherwise, hepatitis D is incapable of existing alone. Hepatitis G was discovered in Canada in 1993 and almost no information exists on it due to its “newness” and lack of long-term research. A few cases of hepatitis that didn't quite fit the A, B, C, D, or E profile were identified in the early 1980s and labeled hepatitis F in 1994. These viruses have now been identified as variants of hepatitis C. The hepatitis F label isn't currently used for any virus. The latest virus to be named is hepatitis G, a single-stranded, enveloped RNA virus similar to hepatitis C. Two variants of hepatitis G have been identified, and researchers are working to identify other suspected variants. All strains of hepatitis may incubate for several weeks before the infected person begins experiencing any symptoms. This is a very dangerous time because the infected person could be passing the disease on to others without even knowing he/she is infected.
**Transmission:** Contact with infectious blood, all are transmitted much like the other hepatitis viruses.
**There is no vaccine or cure for hepatitis D, Hepatitis E, Hepatitis F, Hepatitis G.**

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## Disease Fact Sheet *(Continued)*

**HIV** stands for human immunodeficiency virus. This is the virus that causes AIDS. HIV is different from most other viruses because it attacks the immune system. The immune system gives our bodies the ability to fight infections. HIV finds and destroys a type of white blood cell that the immune system must have to fight disease. The incubation period for HIV is 20-60 days before a test will produce a positive result.
**There is no vaccination and no cure.**

**AIDS** stands for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. AIDS is the final stage of HIV infection. It can take years for a person infected with HIV, even without treatment, to reach this stage. Having AIDS means that the virus has weakened the immune system to the point at which the body has a difficult time fighting infection. Someone with one or more specific infections, certain cancers, or a very low number of T cells, he or she is considered to have AIDS.

**MRSA** is Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is a type of bacteria that is resistant to certain antibiotics. These antibiotics include methicillin and other more common antibiotics such as oxacillin, penicillin and amoxicillin. Staph infections, including MRSA, occur most frequently among persons in hospitals and healthcare facilities (such as nursing homes and dialysis centers) who have weakened immune systems.

MRSA infections that occur in otherwise healthy people who have not been recently (within one year) hospitalized or had a medical procedure (such as dialysis, surgery, catheters) are known as community-associated (CA)-MRSA infections. These infections are usually skin infections, such as abscesses, boils, and other pus-filled lesions.

**Airborne Pathogens**

**Tuberculosis** (TB) is a disease caused by germs that are spread from person to person through the air. TB usually affects the lungs, but it can also affect other parts of the body, such as the brain, the kidneys, or the spine. A person with TB can die if they do not get treatment. TB germs are put into the air when a person with TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs, sneezes, speaks, or sings. These germs can stay in the air for several hours, depending on the environment. Persons who breathe in the air containing these TB germs can become infected.

**Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome** (HPS) is a deadly lung disease transmitted by the urine, feces, or saliva of infected rodents. Humans are susceptible to contracting the disease from breathing the virus in aerosolized form, found when stirring up dust when sweeping. HPS was first recognized in 1993 and although rare is still potentially fatal. Rodent control in and around the home remains the primary strategy for preventing the Hantavirus infection.
**At present, there is no specific treatment or cure for Hantavirus disease.**

*Information provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).*