HEPATITIS A
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is hepatitis A?
Hepatitis A is a contagious liver disease caused by the Hepatitis A virus.

What are the symptoms?
Some people infected with the virus do not have any symptoms. The symptoms of hepatitis A can include:
- Fever
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Nausea and vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Jaundice (yellowing of the eyes and skin)

Symptoms usually appear anywhere from 2-6 weeks after exposure to the virus, and usually last less than 2 months. Some people can be sick for as long as 6 months.

How does hepatitis A spread?
Hepatitis A is usually spread when the virus enters the body through the mouth from contact with objects, food, or drinks that have been contaminated by the feces (poop) of an infected person. It can spread through improper hand-washing after a bowel movement, changing diapers or cleaning up the stool of an infected person, or through sexual activities such as oral-anal contact with a person infected with the hepatitis A virus. Hepatitis A can also be spread by eating food or drinking water contaminated with the virus, including frozen and undercooked food. People who have Hepatitis A infection can spread it to others 2 weeks before and 1 week after developing symptoms.

What should I do if I am exposed?
- Hepatitis A vaccine can be given to help prevent infection in healthy persons who are 12 months of age and older and have been exposed to someone who was ill with Hepatitis A. The vaccine should be given as soon as possible and within 2 weeks to ensure it is most effective.
- Persons who have previously received two doses of Hepatitis A vaccine OR have a history of Hepatitis A infection are considered protected and will not need to be vaccinated following an exposure.
- Persons who have an underlying condition that suppresses the immune system should contact the health department at 215-685-6742, since an antibody product is recommended for you instead of the Hepatitis A vaccine. This product should be given within 2 weeks of the exposure.
- To ensure you are protected from Hepatitis A exposures in the future, persons who receive Hepatitis A vaccine following a specific exposure should get a second dose of the Hepatitis A vaccine six months later.

What should I do if I think I have hepatitis A?
If you think you have Hepatitis A, you should contact your doctor.

How is hepatitis A prevented?
The best way to prevent Hepatitis A is through vaccination with the Hepatitis A vaccine. Frequent hand washing with soap and warm water after using the bathroom, changing a diaper, or before preparing food can help prevent the spread of Hepatitis A.