



Sequatchie Valley Planning & Development Agency
Sequatchie Valley Head Start

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Dear Parent or Guardian:

A child or staff member in our program has been diagnosed with a viral infection called Hepatitis A, and your child may have been exposed.

Information about Hepatitis A:

What is Hepatitis A? Hepatitis A is an infection of the liver caused by a virus. It can cause tiredness, fever, lack of appetite, nausea, and jaundice, (yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes, with darkening of the urine). The illness usually lasts 1 to 2 weeks. Young children do not usually become jaundiced, however, and may have only flu-like illness, or no symptoms at all.

How do you get it? The virus lives in the intestines and is passed out of the body in the stool. The virus is microscopic, so you cannot see it. If people do not wash their hands well after toileting a child or themselves, or do not wash the child's hands, the virus can be spread to other people, food, drink or other things. The germs can then be swallowed by another person, multiply in the intestines, and cause illness 2 to 8 weeks later. If a person may have swallowed some germs, the illness may be prevented by a shot of immunoglobulin.

How is it diagnosed? Hepatitis A is diagnosed by a blood test.

What should you do about Hepatitis A?

1. Be sure all members of your household thoroughly wash their hands after going to the toilet, helping a child go to the toilet or changing a diaper. They must wash the children's hands too. **These are the most important things to do!** Hands should also be washed before touching food, eating, or feeding others.
2. If anyone in your household develops signs of Hepatitis A, ask your health care provider to do a blood test. Tell us if the test is positive.
3. Do any of the following checked items:
 - a. Ask your health care provider to give your child a shot of immunoglobulin. The immunoglobulin may be available free of charge to your physician from your state or local health department.
 - b. Ask your health care provider to give immunoglobulin shots to all other people in your household.