

HEPATITIS A

Why have you been contacted by The Environmental Health Service?

We have a legal obligation to investigate causes of food borne illness, and will also advise on precautions that should be taken. We will also investigate the suspected source of contamination (e.g. food and food businesses) and try to ensure that no further cases occur.

What is Hepatitis A?

An illness caused by a particular virus. The incubation period for hepatitis A is long, 15-50 days (on average about 28 days). Hepatitis A should not be confused with Hepatitis B and C.

Further information:

Should you require any further information regarding Hepatitis A, please contact:

The Food Safety Section,
Environmental Health Service,
South Holland District Council,
Council Offices, Priory Road,
Spalding, Lincs.
PE11 2XE.

Telephone (01775) 761161.
www.sholland.gov.uk



Where do the bacteria come from and how are they spread?

Most cases are spread by close personal contact via the faecal-oral route involving direct hand to mouth contact or by the consumption of contaminated food. Shell fish have been associated with this virus.

SYMPTOMS

- " Fever
- " Loss of appetite
- " Feeling tired
- " Jaundice
- " Diarrhoea
- " Pale Stools
- " Dark Urine

What should I do to prevent further spread?

1. Good Personal Hygiene

Thorough hand washing (using hot soapy water) each time after using the toilet and immediately prior to any handling, preparation, or serving of food. Towels should not be shared. Children must be supervised to

thoroughly wash their hands after using the WC and before eating food. Use disposable towels.

2. Food Hygiene

Try to avoid preparing or handling food. However where this must be carried out, thorough hand washing as above must be carried out prior to this. Young children must be supervised to thoroughly wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating food.

3. Soiled Clothing and Bed Linen

This should be washed in a domestic washing machine using the hot cycle. As much faecal material as possible must be flushed down the toilet. Rubber gloves should be worn and hands thoroughly washed afterwards.

4. Toilet Hygiene

Disinfect the toilet at least once a day and wipe hand contact points, such as the toilet seat, door, handles, taps etc. with a bleach solution at the correct strength.

5. Spillages

Clean up all spillages of vomit or faecal material as soon as possible using a bleach solution at the correct strength and a disposable cloth.

Disinfection is particularly appropriate after the toilet has been used by an infected person.

6. Washing Up

Rinse all crockery, knives and spoons etc. with very hot water after washing up and allow to air dry.

7. Doctor

Doctors may prescribe an immunoglobulin injection to protect household contacts, but as this only gives partial protection, attention to hygiene is still important.

8. Food Handlers

Persons working with food or in health care facilities who know or suspect that they or a member of their household are suffering from Hepatitis A must inform their employer immediately. Employee's or school children should remain off work/school until 7 days after the onset of symptoms, usually jaundice.