

# HEPATITIS A

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### WHAT ARE THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HEPATITIS A VACCINE?

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) routinely recommends hepatitis A vaccination for all children, for people who are at increased risk for infection, and for any people who want to obtain immunity.

### WHO SHOULD GET VACCINATED?

During this current hepatitis A outbreak, the Health District is working with community partners to vaccinate people who are more likely to be infected including people who use injection or non-injection drugs (legal or illicit), people who are experiencing homelessness, and people who have recently been in jail or prison.

The CDC recommends hepatitis A vaccination for the following people:

- All children at age of 1 year
- People who are traveling to or working in countries where hepatitis A is common
- Family and caregivers of adoptees from countries where hepatitis A is common
- Men who have sex with men
- Users of recreational drugs, whether injected or not
- People with unstable housing or experiencing homelessness
- People with chronic or long-term liver disease, including cirrhosis, hepatitis B or hepatitis C
- People with clotting-factor disorders
- People with direct contact with others who have hepatitis A
- Any person wishing to obtain immunity (protection)

### DOES THE VACCINE WORK IF I ONLY GET ONE DOSE?

Two shots of the hepatitis A virus vaccine are recommended. Although the first dose of the vaccine

is considered to be around 95 percent effective, that protection will eventually begin to decrease and a second shot boosts immunity for between 20 and 40 years, according to the CDC.

You can get a combination vaccine to protect you against both hepatitis A and B. Check with your health care provider.

### CAN I GET MY HEPATITIS A SHOT WHEN I GET OTHER IMMUNIZATIONS?

You can receive the hepatitis A vaccine when you receive other immunizations. The injection site will be different.

### IS THE HEPATITIS A VACCINE EFFECTIVE?

Yes, the hepatitis A vaccine is highly effective in preventing hepatitis A virus infection. A second hepatitis A shot results in long-term protection.

### IS THE HEPATITIS A VACCINE SAFE?

Yes, the hepatitis A vaccine is safe. No serious side effects have been reported from the hepatitis A vaccine. Soreness at the injection site is the most common side effect reported. As with any medicine, there is always a small risk that a serious problem could occur after someone gets the vaccine. However, the potential risks associated with hepatitis A are much greater than the potential risks associated with the hepatitis A vaccine. Since the first hepatitis A vaccine was licensed in 1995, millions of doses have been given in the United States and worldwide.

### WHO SHOULD NOT RECEIVE THE HEPATITIS A VACCINE?

If you have any questions about receiving the hepatitis A vaccine, talk to your health care provider. Anyone who has had a serious allergic reaction to ►

### Hepatitis A vaccinations are available at

Southern Nevada Health District  
280 S. Decatur Blvd. • Las Vegas, NV 89107  
(702) 759-1000 • [www.SNHD.info](http://www.SNHD.info)

# HEPATITIS A

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

◀ any of the vaccine or its components should not get the vaccine. Tell your doctor if you have any severe allergies. Also, the vaccine is not licensed for use in infants under age 1 year.

### **WILL THE HEPATITIS A VACCINE PROTECT ME FROM OTHER FORMS OF HEPATITIS?**

No, the hepatitis A vaccine will only protect you against hepatitis A. There is a separate vaccine available for hepatitis B. There is also a combination hepatitis A and hepatitis B vaccine that offers protection for both viruses. There is no vaccine for hepatitis C at this time.

### **CAN I GET MY HEPATITIS VACCINE DURING PREGNANCY?**

If you are pregnant, check with your health care provider about getting a hepatitis A vaccine. The Health District will not administer hepatitis A vaccine to a pregnant woman without a prescription from her health care provider.

### **CAN I GET A HEPATITIS A VACCINE IF I HAVE HIV OR AIDS OR IF I HAVE A COMPROMISED IMMUNE SYSTEM?**

Yes. The hepatitis A vaccine is an inactivated vaccine, like a flu shot. If you have any questions, you should check with your health care provider.

### **DO FOOD HANDLERS HAVE TO GET VACCINATED?**

People who are applying for the Health District's Food Handler Safety Training Card are not currently required to receive the hepatitis A vaccine.

### **IS IT RECOMMENDED THAT FOOD HANDLERS GET VACCINATED?**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

does not recommend vaccinating all food handlers because it is not an effective way to stop an outbreak. The hepatitis A outbreak that is happening in Clark County is primarily affecting people who report using injection or non-injection drugs and people who are experiencing homelessness.

The hepatitis A vaccine is available for individual food handlers who have not been previously vaccinated and would like to be protected from hepatitis A. Food facilities, such as restaurants, can also offer the vaccine to their staff.

### **WHY ISN'T IT RECOMMENDED THAT FOOD HANDLERS GET VACCINATED?**

Food handlers are not at an increased risk for hepatitis A infections because of their occupation. Food handlers are required to use safe hand hygiene practices in their jobs. These practices help prevent the spread of hepatitis A, even in the case of food handlers who are infected with the virus. Very few hepatitis A outbreaks are associated with food handlers.

### **IS THE VACCINE REQUIRED FOR SCHOOL?**

Two doses of hepatitis A vaccine are required for students in the Clark County School District. Parents should check their children's immunization records prior to enrollment because the hepatitis A vaccine might not be required in other jurisdictions. For additional information about school immunizations, visit our Back to School Vaccine Clinics page at [www.snhd.info/school](http://www.snhd.info/school).

### **WHERE CAN I GET VACCINATED?**

Hepatitis A vaccine is available at the Southern Nevada Health District, at health care provider offices and clinics, and pharmacies.

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