



Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care Public Health

Environmental Health
300 Carlton Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada R3B 3M9

Hepatitis A Health Reminder

Manitoba Health is monitoring an increase in hepatitis A cases in Manitoba. In response, the Health Protection Unit is sharing this reminder to reinforce the importance of safe food handling practices in helping prevent the spread of infection.

What is Hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a contagious viral infection that affects the liver. It is most commonly spread by consuming contaminated food or water, or through close contact with an infected person.

Why this matters in food handling?

When food handlers work while ill or do not follow proper hygiene and safe food handling practices, the risk of spreading hepatitis A increases. Food can become contaminated if it is prepared by a person who is infected and has not thoroughly washed their hands after using the washroom.

What food safety practices to follow?

To help prevent the spread of hepatitis A, food handlers should follow these key food safety practices:

Personal hygiene

- Do not prepare food if you are feeling unwell, especially if you have nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.
- Wash hands before and after handling food.
- Wash hands after using the washroom.
- Wash hands after touching raw food, garbage, or contaminated surfaces.
- Use gloves when appropriate, but remember that gloves do not replace proper handwashing.

Food preparation and sanitation

- Clean and sanitize all food preparation surfaces regularly.
- Prevent cross-contamination by keeping raw and ready-to-eat foods separate.
- Regularly clean and sanitize all food contact surfaces, including customer tables, equipment, utensils, and cutting boards, after each use or as often as necessary.
- Use a chlorine sanitizer on clean-in-place food contact surfaces. Allow at least one minute of contact time or follow the label instructions. Check sanitizer strength with test papers (100 ppm for chlorine).



Dishwashing

- Ensure mechanical dishwashers are sanitizing properly. A high-temperature dishwasher must reach at least 65.5 °C (150 °F) during the wash cycle and 82 °C (180 °F) during the rinse cycle for at least 10 seconds.
- Chemical dishwashers or glasswashers must provide 50 to 100 ppm chlorine or 12.5 ppm iodine.
- Maintained and operated according to manufacturer specifications (data plate and manual).
- Evaluated using [NSF Recommended Field Evaluation Procedures for Commercial Warewashing Machines](#)
- For manual dishwashing in a three-compartment sink, use 50 to 100 ppm chlorine, 12.5 ppm iodine, or 200 ppm quaternary ammonium, or follow the manufacturer's instructions.

High-touch surfaces

Disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, and sinks, at least twice per day using a disinfectant appropriate for the surface. Follow disinfectant label instructions carefully, including any safety precautions such as wearing gloves, using eye protection, and ensuring good ventilation.

Steps for cleaning vomit, feces or blood

Clean the contaminated surfaces with a detergent or soap product before disinfecting. Rinse the solution with warm water. Use an effective disinfectant for hepatitis A.

- **Use Chlorine Solution of 5000 ppm:** using household chlorine bleach (at 5.25% of sodium hypochlorite) use 1 and ¾ metric cups bleach in 3.6 Litres of water. Use for stainless steel, food/mouth contact items, tile floors, nonporous surfaces, counters, sinks and toilets.
- At 5000 ppm of chlorine, this is a very high level of disinfectant.

Remember when using a high level disinfectant

- Wear gloves and protect your clothing.
- Use chemicals in well-ventilated areas.
- Avoid contact between incompatible chemicals.
- For surfaces that are corroded or damaged by bleach, use another product effective against hepatitis A

Vaccination and reporting?

Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent Hepatitis A. If you believe you may have been exposed or are experiencing symptoms, please notify your supervisor and seek medical advice promptly.

Maintaining strong hygiene practices protects not only your health but also the safety of those we serve.

More information about hepatitis A can be found here at Manitoba Health, Public Health Disease webpage: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/diseases/hepatitisa.html>

If you have any questions or need additional guidance, contact the Health Protection Unit at healthprotection@gov.mb.ca