



## Hepatitis and LGBT Health

**Viral hepatitis is a serious infection that affects the liver. It can lead to cirrhosis, liver cancer, liver failure and death. Although hepatitis can affect anyone, men who have sex with men and transgender people are at particular risk for two distinct types of the virus — hepatitis A and hepatitis B.**

**Hepatitis A** is spread primarily by contact with contaminated food or water, rimming, handling a used condom or sex toys, or butt play. For hep A there is a vaccine.

**Hepatitis B** is transmitted through bodily fluids (blood, semen, saliva), through unprotected sexual contact and sharing needles. For hep B there is a vaccine.

**Hepatitis C** is spread predominantly through sharing needles. Some cases have resulted from non-sterile piercings and tattooing. For hepatitis C there is no vaccine.

Common early symptoms of hepatitis are extreme fatigue, appetite loss, nausea and vomiting, jaundice, dark urine and sometimes dull abdominal pain. Hepatitis can be easily spread during the initial infection period during which you may exhibit no symptoms at all but will be highly contagious.

### HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO TO LOWER YOUR RISK OF CONTRACTING HEPATITIS:

- Get vaccinated! There are now safe and effective vaccines available to protect you against hepatitis A and hepatitis B. And getting vaccinated is one of the simplest things you can do to protect your health. Make certain to complete the series of vaccines (three for hep A and two for hep B, and three for the combined hep A/hep B vaccine) to ensure maximum effectiveness.
- If you have sex with multiple male partners, get vaccinated for hep A and hep B. If you have a chronic liver disease, inject drugs, or plan to travel in the developing world, talk to your doc about these vaccinations.
- If you're exposed to hep A but not yet immune to it, consult your doctor about getting an immune globulin shot. It may protect you if caught early.

**HELPFUL WEBSITES :** [www.gлма.org/hepatitis](http://www.gлма.org/hepatitis) • [www.hepclinics.com](http://www.hepclinics.com)

take charge of your health.

you can protect yourself against hepatitis.



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LGBT HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK  
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