

Hepatitis

This information is based on the national guidance: [Health protection in children and young people settings, including education](#).

Hepatitis is a term used to describe inflammation (swelling) of the liver, it can have different causes including viral infections and chronic alcohol use. The different causes include:

- **Hepatitis A** is a viral infection, it can vary from a mild illness over a couple of weeks, to a more serious illness over several months. Hepatitis A is caught by eating contaminated food or water, or close contact with an infected person.
- **Hepatitis B** is a viral infection, in the UK it is not common in children. Illness can be acute over only a few weeks, or chronic over several months. It is possible to be asymptomatic and still pass on the infection. Hepatitis B is spread through contact with infected blood and bodily fluids. This could be sexual contact or contact with unclean medical or dental equipment.
- **Hepatitis C** is a viral infection, that is not common in children. It is possible to be asymptomatic and still pass on the infection. Hepatitis C is spread through blood-to-blood contact.
- **Hepatitis D** is a viral infection, it only affects people who are already infected with Hepatitis B and is uncommon in the UK.
- **Hepatitis E** is a viral infection, that has become more common in the UK recently. It has been mainly associated with consumption of raw or undercooked pork meat, offal, venison, and shellfish.

Symptoms:

- Muscle and joint pain
- High temperature
- Feeling and being sick
- Tiredness
- Feeling unwell
- Loss of appetite
- Tummy pain
- Dark urine
- Pale, grey-coloured poo
- Itchy skin
- Jaundice (yellowing of eyes and skin)

Parents are advised to trust their instincts and contact their GP or 111 if their child has these symptoms or the parent is worried.

When should children with symptoms of hepatitis stop coming to school, nursery, or college?

Children and staff with hepatitis A should be excluded whilst unwell; or for 7 days after the onset of jaundice or symptoms if no jaundice is present.

Children and staff with hepatitis B will generally be too unwell to attend school.



Staff and children with chronic hepatitis B or C should not be excluded from school and can attend if they are well enough.

Contact your UKHSA health protection team on 0344 2254 524 if you require further advice on exclusion periods for different types of hepatitis.

What should we do in the education setting?

Contact the UKHSA health protection team (0344 2254 524) if there are 2 or more cases with similar symptoms linked by time or place, or if you require more advice.

Ensure food hygiene standards are kept high.

Ensure any bodily fluid spillages (diarrhoea, vomiting, blood etc.) are cleaned up appropriately, staff cleaning up bodily fluid spillages should have the PPE and equipment needed to clean up any spillages.

Encourage children to wash their hands. Children should use soap and water or alcohol hand gel regularly, but especially before eating or handling food, after using the toilet, and after coughing or sneezing.

Maintain a thorough cleaning regime, especially in kitchens, bathrooms, and areas where there are groups of children with symptoms. Objects such as light switches and handrails that are touched frequently throughout the day should be cleaned more regularly.

Equipment such as dishwashers and washing machines should be appropriately maintained to ensure they remain operational.

Encourage staff and children to receive vaccinations that they are eligible for:

- A vaccine for hepatitis B has been offered routinely to all babies born in the UK from the 1st of August 2017, it is also available for people at high risk of infection or complications from hepatitis B
- Vaccinations for hepatitis A are available but are not routinely offered due to the low risk in the UK -certain groups at higher risk may be offered this vaccine
- Currently there are no vaccinations for hepatitis C, D and E.

Teaching resources:

Early years - [hand and respiratory hygiene](#)

KS1 - [hand and respiratory hygiene](#)

KS2 - [hand and respiratory hygiene and vaccinations](#)

KS3 - [hand and respiratory hygiene and vaccinations](#)

KS4 - [hand and respiratory hygiene and vaccinations](#)

