

The ABCs Of Hepatitis



	Hepatitis A	Hepatitis B	Hepatitis C
How common is it in Singapore?	Not very common.	Common. About 4% of the local population are hepatitis B carriers.	Very uncommon.
Mode of infection	Eating contaminated seafood or unhygienic food.	Vertical transmission - from mother to child during childbirth. Horizontal transmission - through blood contact, sexual intercourse.	Usually through transfusion with contaminated blood or sharing of needles with hepatitis C carriers.
What are the symptoms?	Jaundice, lethargy, fever.	Jaundice, lethargy, fever.	Jaundice, lethargy, fever.
Are there risks/ complications?	< 1% develop liver failure.	15%-40% may develop long-term problems such as liver cirrhosis or liver cancer.	20% may develop cirrhosis (hardened liver) over 20 years. Patients with cirrhosis risk developing liver cancer. About 2% of these patients are afflicted with liver cancer.
Is treatment/ medication available?	Yes. Mainly supportive treatment. Symptomatic treatment is provided. Patients are watched closely for acute liver failure.	Yes. Controllable with antiviral drugs. There are 2 groups of drugs available. One group stimulates the immune system to fight the virus. The other suppresses the viral replication directly.	Yes. Controllable with antiviral drugs.
Can it be treated completely?	Yes.	No, but risk of progression to liver cirrhosis or cancer can be greatly reduced by antiviral drugs.	Yes, about 50% can be cured by current antiviral drugs.
Precautions: - Dietary modifications - Lifestyle habits	- Avoid eating at unhygienic places. - Avoid going to hepatitis A endemic areas. - Vaccinate against hepatitis A.	- Obtain hepatitis B immunity vaccine. - Do not share needles.	Do not share needles.
Should family members go for screening?	Not necessary.	Yes.	Risk of transmission through sexual intercourse is < 5% so spouses are advised to go for screening.
Immunisations	Available. 2 injections 6 months apart (long-lasting protection).	Available. 3 injections over 6 months (long-lasting protection).	Not available.