People with hepatitis infection may be asymptomatic or symptomatic. In both cases, they can pass the disease on to others. People with hepatitis often get symptoms such as yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice), fever, nausea, vomiting, lack of appetite, abdominal pain (on the upper right side), darker colored bowel movements and dark-colored urine.

Hepatitis A is a self-limiting disease and is rarely fatal. People develop immunity to hepatitis A virus after recovery. Hepatitis B and C are a more serious infection. They may lead to a cirrhosis (permanent scarring of the liver) or liver cancer, both of which cause severe illness and even death. In most cases, those that get hepatitis B recover from the disease and may develop a natural immunity to future hepatitis B infections, but some people will have chronic infection. Hepatitis C is the most serious type of hepatitis and is one of the most common reasons for liver transplants in adults.

The incubation period for hepatitis varies depending on the type of virus. Symptoms may appear anytime from 15 days to 50 days after getting the disease.

The hepatitis A virus is transmitted through ingesting food or drink contaminated with the faeces of infected individuals. Bloodborne transmission of hepatitis A virus occurs, but is much less common. Hepatitis B and C virus are transmitted from person to person through blood or other body fluids. Hepatitis B virus is also spread from mother to child at birth or from person to person in early childhood.

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