

## Hepatitis A

*Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Health*

### Why in news?

*In recent years, multiple outbreaks of Hepatitis A in India have caused acute liver failure, making a strong case for its inclusion in the [Universal Immunisation Programme \(UIP\)](#).*

*World Hepatitis Day - **July 28***

- **Hepatitis A** - It is a **highly contagious liver infection** caused by the hepatitis A virus.
- Unlike hepatitis B and C, it does not cause chronic liver disease or permanent liver damage, and most people recover completely.
- **Transmission & Causes** -
  - The virus is primarily spread through the fecal-oral route, meaning a person ingests food or water contaminated with the feces of an infected person.
  - The disease is closely associated with unsafe water or food, inadequate sanitation, poor personal hygiene and oral-anal sex.
- **Symptoms** -
  - Usually appear 2 to 6 weeks after exposure and are often mild, especially in young children.
  - They can last for several months in adults and may include fatigue, nausea & vomiting, abdominal pain (upper right side), fever, loss of appetite, jaundice, itching, etc.
- **Risk factors** - Poor sanitation, unsafe water, and inadequate hygiene practices.
- **Treatment** - There is **no specific antiviral treatment** for hepatitis A, instead it typically involves **supportive care** to manage symptoms and keep the patient comfortable.
- **Prevention** - Improved sanitation, food safety, safer sex practices

(notably for oral-anal sex) and immunization are the most effective ways to combat hepatitis A.

- India has its own ***indigenous vaccine - Biovac-A***, a live-attenuated vaccine for Hepatitis A.

***Hepatitis B vaccine is already part of UIP).***

- **WHO's Global Hepatitis Report, 2024**

- Viral hepatitis causes over 1 million deaths annually, mostly from Hepatitis B and C and Hepatitis is now the ***2<sup>nd</sup> leading*** infectious killer after tuberculosis.
- India carries a high burden of Hepatitis A, B, and E, with Hepatitis A increasingly causing acute liver failure.
- **2030 Targets** – WHO aims to reduce new infections by 90% and deaths by 65%.

## References

1. [The Hindu | Hepatitis A deserves a place in India's UIP](#)
2. [WHO | Hepatitis A](#)
3. [CDC | Hepatitis A](#)