

# PROTECTION FROM HEPATITIS A

## **What is Hepatitis A?**

Hepatitis A is a vaccine-preventable liver infection spread by the Hepatitis A virus (HAV). It can make a person feel very tired and have a fever, upset stomach and loss of appetite. Individuals with the virus can have yellow skin and eyes (jaundice). Some individuals never know they have Hepatitis A because they don't always get sick but still pass the virus onto others.

## **How is Hepatitis A spread?**

Hepatitis A can be spread through contact with an infected person's feces (i.e. bowel movement) or by drinking contaminated food or water. For these reasons proper hand washing after using the washroom and before touching food is very important. Hepatitis A can also pass from person-to-person through some forms of sexual contact.

## **Why do we recommend vaccination for Hepatitis A?**

Vaccination is the best way to protect against Hepatitis A. The complete Hepatitis A vaccination schedule consists of 2 doses at 0 and 6-12 months apart.

## **What are the vaccine's common side effects?**

The most common side effects include soreness, swelling and/or redness at the injection site, slight fever, headache, tiredness or irritability. Serious side effects are rare and should be reported to your community/public health nurse.

## **Is Hepatitis A vaccine safe?**

All vaccines recommended by the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Provincial Department of Health and Community Services such as this one are safe and effective.

## **Who should NOT get the vaccine?**

Anyone who has a severe allergic reaction to any contents of the vaccine or had a reaction to a previous dose of this vaccine should talk to their Health Care Provider for advice about future immunization with this vaccine.

## **Is this vaccine mandatory?**

The vaccine is not mandatory but is highly recommended for protection against this vaccine preventable disease.

**For additional information and  
services contact the Regional Health  
Authority in your community**