Hepatitis A and Hepatitis E are serious liver diseases. The Hepatitis A virus (HAV) is found in the stool of persons with Hepatitis A. It is usually spread by close personal contact and sometimes by eating food or drinking water containing HAV. Hepatitis A can cause: mild “flu-like” illness, jaundice (yellow skin or eyes), and severe stomach pains and diarrhea. It is an acute, not chronic, infection and people with Hepatitis A infection often have to be hospitalized. In rare cases, Hepatitis A causes death.

The best way to protect against Hepatitis A infections is by getting the vaccine, which is available. People who have ever had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose of Hepatitis A vaccine should not get another dose.

The people who are at the highest risk for Hepatitis A are children in daycare, travelers outside the United States, and raw shellfish eaters. Those at risk for Hepatitis E are travelers outside the United States. So far, there have been no reported cases of Hepatitis E originating in the United States.