Hepatitis means that the liver is inflamed. This inflammation (swelling) can be caused by germs, viruses, some medicines, some diseases, or heavy alcohol use.

Three common types of hepatitis are caused by viruses:
- Hepatitis A virus causes hepatitis A.
- Hepatitis B virus causes hepatitis B.
- Hepatitis C virus causes hepatitis C.

These three kinds of hepatitis can be acute. Hepatitis B and C can become chronic.

Acute viral hepatitis:
- Is caused by hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C viruses.
- Usually occurs within a few weeks after you first get infected with the virus.
- Can be mild, severe or even life-threatening.
- Hepatitis B or C can sometimes lead to long-term (chronic) infection.
Chronic viral hepatitis:
◆ Is caused only by hepatitis B and hepatitis C viruses.
◆ May be lifelong.
◆ Can cause liver damage, cirrhosis (scarring of the liver), and liver cancer.

What are the signs of hepatitis?
You may not have any sign of hepatitis. Or, you may have:
◆ Yellow skin or eyes (jaundice).
◆ Tiredness.
◆ Fever.
◆ Nausea.
◆ Vomiting.
◆ Loss of appetite.
◆ Stomach pain.
◆ Light stools.
◆ Dark urine.

Symptoms can appear anywhere from 2 to 6 weeks after contact with the virus.