



Hepatitis D

Fact Sheet

What is hepatitis D?

Hepatitis D is a serious liver disease. It is caused by the Hepatitis D virus (HDV). Only people who already have Hepatitis B virus (HBV) can get HDV.

What are the symptoms?

The signs and symptoms are like those for HBV.

Symptoms include:

- Loss of appetite
- Belly pain
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Arthritis pain
- Rash
- Yellowing of the skin and eyes

Symptoms usually start 90 days after exposure. Symptoms can start as early as 14 days or as late as 160 days after exposure.

How is hepatitis D spread?

Hepatitis D is spread by exposure to blood, semen, or other body fluid infected with the hepatitis D virus. The virus can be spread by injecting drugs, sexual contact, or from tainted blood products. It can also be spread to household members with hepatitis B.

How common is it?

Hepatitis D is rare in the United States. It is found mostly in people who inject drugs or have bleeding disorders. HDV is also found in people who have lived in areas where it is more common, such as in Africa, South America, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and parts of Russia.

How do you know if you have it?

A blood test is needed to diagnose hepatitis D.

How can you prevent this illness?

You can prevent hepatitis D by getting vaccinated for hepatitis B. If you have hepatitis B, you can still prevent hepatitis D by avoiding high-risk activities such as injecting drugs, unprotected sex, and contact with blood or body fluids.

How is it treated?

There is currently no effective treatment for hepatitis D, so prevention is best.

What should I do if I think I have it?

Contact your healthcare provider right away if you have symptoms listed on this page. Tell your healthcare provider if you think that you have been exposed to hepatitis.

Where can I get more information?

For more information contact your healthcare provider or local health center. You can find more information about hepatitis D at: Hepatitis Delta Connect - <http://www.hepb.org/research-and-programs/hepdeltaconnect/>, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website - <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hdv/index.htm> or by contacting the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention at 1-800-821-5821.