

Health Care Education Hepatitis D



Hidayah Foundation

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And when I am sick, then He heals me. - - - Al Quran – Ash-Shuraa, Verse 26:80

Hepatitis D

What is Hepatitis D? Hepatitis D is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis D virus (HDV), a defective virus that needs the hepatitis B virus to exist.

Why is the Liver so important? The liver is the largest, heaviest and one of the most important internal organs. Dark red in color, it weighs 1-1.5 kg and is located behind the lower right part of your ribs. It stores vitamins, sugars, fats and other nutrients from the food you eat and then releases them to the body when needed. It also builds basic chemicals that your body needs to stay healthy. Last but not least; it removes waste products, harmful bacteria and toxic chemicals from your blood. In other words - it is the powerhouse, recycling, and disposal plant of the body. Life is not possible without the liver.

What are the symptoms of Hepatitis D?

Jaundice, Fatigue, Abdominal pain, Loss of appetite, Nausea, Vomiting, Joint pain, and Dark (tea colored) urine.

Hepatitis D is prevented by:

- Hepatitis B virus (HBV) and HDV superinfection (Superinfection is the process of getting HDV while treating HBV)
- Providing education to reduce risk behaviors (abusing drugs, tattooing...etc) among persons with chronic HBV infection.
- Prompt recognition and treatment of Hepatitis B infection can help prevent Hepatitis D.

- Avoiding unprotected sex
- Not using drugs
- Avoiding unsanitary tattoo methods
- Avoiding unsanitary body piercing methods
- Avoiding needle stick injury
- Avoiding sharing of grooming utensils

How does HDV spread? HDV spreads:

- When blood from an infected person enters the body of a person who is not immune.
- Through marital relations with an infected person without using a condom (the effectiveness of latex condoms in preventing infection with HBV is unknown, but their proper use may reduce transmission)
- By sharing needles when "shooting" drugs
- Through needle sticks or sharp exposures on the job.
- From an infected mother to her baby during birth.

How do you kill Hepatitis D Virus? HDV comes only if Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) exists. HBV can survive outside the body at least 7 days and still be capable of causing infection. You should clean up any blood spills - including dried blood, which can still be infectious - using 1:10 dilution of one part household bleach to 10 parts of water for disinfecting the area. Use gloves when cleaning any blood spills.

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Who should get tested for Hepatitis D? If you can answer “YES” to any of these questions, please see your doctor immediately because you might be at risk for HDV.

Please answer these questions honestly.

Currently, or in the past – have you:

- | | | |
|---|------------|-----------|
| - Experienced chronic fatigue or tiredness? | Yes | No |
| - Had jaundice? | Yes | No |
| - Had abdominal pain, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, joint pain, and dark urine? | Yes | No |
| - Had a surgery, including Oral surgery? | Yes | No |
| - Had a C-section for childbirth (for women)? | Yes | No |
| - Received haemodialysis? | Yes | No |
| - does your child have an infected mother? | Yes | No |
| - Had an elevated Liver Enzyme Test (ALT- is an enzyme found in the liver)? | Yes | No |
| - Been Diagnosed with Hepatitis B? | Yes | No |
| - Had a tattoo? | Yes | No |
| - Had a body piercing (nose, ears, etc.)? | Yes | No |
| - Had multiple sex partners or had sex with some one who fits the above description? | Yes | No |
| Does your work put you in contact with blood, blood products or needles? | Yes | No |
| Have any of your immediate family members been diagnosed with Hepatitis B? | Yes | No |
| Have you had a blood transfusion? | Yes | No |

How does Hepatitis D impact health? The impact of Hepatitis D depends on the type of infection.

- In case of a co-infection (occurs simultaneously) with hepatitis B virus, the patient may have more severe acute disease and a higher risk (2%-20%) of developing acute liver failure compared with those infected with HBV alone.
- As a superinfection (Acquiring HDV while treating HBV) in persons with existing chronic HBV infection, chronic HBV carriers usually develop chronic HDV infection progression to cirrhosis is believed to be more common with HBV/HDV chronic infections.

How do you know if you have Hepatitis D virus? You have to be tested by a doctor to see if:

- Liver enzymes are elevated.
- Anti-delta agent antibody is positive.
- Liver biopsy shows acute hepatitis.

How do you treat and manage Hepatitis D?

- Acute HDV infection
 - Supportive care (involves making a patient comfortable and help make pain bearable)
- Chronic HDV infection
 - Interferon-alpha (A type of treatment involves boosting the patients own immune system to kill the virus cells)
 - Liver transplant

Sources: Department of Health and Human Services, January 2006 and information available freely on the Internet.

Disclaimer: All information provided in this flyer is posted for educational purposes only; it is not meant to be used as medical advice. For any advice, diagnosis, and treatment consult your personal physician.