

Hepatitis Delta

What is hepatitis delta?

- Hepatitis D virus (HDV), also known as hepatitis delta virus, is an infection that causes inflammation of the liver. If left untreated, HDV can lead to long term liver disease such as liver cirrhosis and cancer.
- HDV is known as a “satellite virus” because it can only infect people who are also infected with hepatitis B virus (HBV). The infection can be acquired at the same time as HBV (*coinfection*) or as a *superinfection* in people who are already chronically infected with HBV. Superinfection of HDV is one of the most severe forms of viral hepatitis; it accelerates progression to severe hepatitis in 70-90% of people.
- The number of hepatitis D cases in the United States is estimated to be more than 125,000; globally, it is estimated that HDV affects between 12 and 60 million people.

How do you get hepatitis delta?

- HDV is most commonly transmitted through contact with blood or other body fluids, such as urine, vaginal fluids, and semen. Unlike HBV, transmission from mother to child is rare.
- Risk factors for HDV include people who are at risk of being infected with HBV such as people who use drugs, sex workers, men who have sex with men, people living with HCV and/or HIV, and people born in countries where HBV is common.

Who should be tested for hepatitis delta?

- While the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD) recommends that only high-risk groups be tested for hepatitis delta, the Hepatitis B Foundation recommends that all people living with hepatitis B get tested.

What are the signs and symptoms of hepatitis delta?

- The most common signs and symptoms of HDV are fatigue and lethargy, loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting, jaundice, dark urine, pain in the upper part of the abdomen, and confusion.
- Signs and symptoms typically appear 3-7 weeks after initial infection.

How do you prevent hepatitis delta?

- Although there is no vaccine approved for the prevention of HDV, immunization against HBV reduces the risk of HDV infection for those who are not already infected with HBV.
- Access to sterile supplies for medical care and drug use is also an effective strategy for preventing HDV.

How do you treat hepatitis delta?

- There is currently no approved drug in the United States for the treatment of hepatitis D. Treatment success rates with pegylated interferon alpha are generally low.
- Bulevirtide (Hepcludex™), an injectable medication, is conditionally approved in Europe for adults who are HDV RNA positive and have compensated liver disease. Submission for accelerated approval in the United States is anticipated in 2021.

Where can I learn more about hepatitis delta?

- [Hepatitis Delta Connect, a program of the Hepatitis B Foundation](#)
- [Hepatitis Delta International Network](#)
- [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)

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