

Hepatitis

What is Hepatitis?

Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver. Hepatitis is usually caused by viruses, but bacteria can also be a cause of hepatitis. Current studies conducted by scientists have shown that there are no more than five viruses that can cause hepatitis. The five types of hepatitis are hepatitis A, B, C, D and hepatitis E.

What are the symptoms of Hepatitis?

Many cases of hepatitis go undiagnosed because the disease is mistaken for the flu or because there are no symptoms at all. The most common symptoms of hepatitis are: loss of appetite, fatigue, mild fever, muscle or joint aches, nausea and vomiting, abdominal pain. Less common symptoms include: dark urine, light-colored stools, jaundice, generalized itching, altered mental state, stupor or coma.

How is Hepatitis A spread?

The virus is found in the stool of an infected person. It is spread when a person eats food or drinks water that has come in contact with infected stool. Sometimes a group of people who eat at the same restaurant can get hepatitis A. This can happen when an employee with hepatitis A doesn't wash his or her hands well after using the bathroom and then prepares food. The disease can also spread in day care centers. Workers can spread the virus if they don't wash their hands well after changing a diaper.

How are Hepatitis B & C spread?

It is spread through contact with the blood and body fluids of an infected person.

Who is at risk for Hepatitis B & C?

Those persons who have had a blood transfusion or organ transplant before 1992. Persons whom have had unprotected sex, shared needles (used for injecting drugs) with an infected person or received a tattoo or piercing with tools that were not cleaned well or shared personal items like razors or toothbrushes with an infected person are also at risk. A mother who has the virus can pass it to her baby during delivery.

How is at risk for Hepatitis D?

Hepatitis D is a form of liver inflammation that occurs only in patients who also are infected by the hepatitis B virus. Infection by the hepatitis delta virus (HDV) either occurs at the same time as hepatitis B develops, or develops later when infection by hepatitis B virus (HBV) has entered the chronic (long-lasting) stage.

What is Hepatitis E?

Hepatitis E (HEV) causes acute hepatitis, but does not lead to chronic hepatitis. It is similar to hepatitis A in that it occurs mainly by contamination of food and water. The disease occurs mostly in developing countries and is widespread in India, Asia, Africa and Central America.

Where can I get more information?