

What is hepatitis E?

Hepatitis E is a liver disease caused by the Hepatitis E virus (HEV).

How is hepatitis E spread?

In areas with poor sanitation, hepatitis E is usually spread by drinking water contaminated by the feces (or stool) of an infected person. Hepatitis E in developed countries may occur as a result of consumption of raw or undercooked pork or deer.

What are the signs and symptoms of hepatitis E?

Symptoms of hepatitis E usually include fever, fatigue, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, and loss of appetite. Other symptoms such as jaundice (yellow skin), dark urine, clay-colored stool, and joint pain may occur. Many people with hepatitis E will not experience any symptoms.

How long after infection do symptoms appear?

Symptoms typically start 15 to 60 days after infection.

Who is most at risk?

In developing countries, older adolescents and young adults aged 15-44 are more likely to have symptoms of hepatitis E. In developed countries, organ transplant recipients on immunosuppressant therapy are at risk of developing hepatitis E

and having it turn into a chronic infection. Pregnant women are also more likely to experience severe symptoms.

What type of health problems are caused by hepatitis E?

Most people with hepatitis E recover completely. Pregnant women, organ transplant recipients, and those with preexisting chronic liver disease are at greater risk for liver failure and death.

How is hepatitis E diagnosed?

Hepatitis E is usually diagnosed through a blood test.

How is hepatitis E treated?

Hepatitis E usually resolves on its own without treatment. There is no specific treatment for acute hepatitis E. Patients are typically advised to rest, get adequate nutrition and fluids, avoid alcohol, and check with their healthcare provider before taking any medications that can damage the liver, especially acetaminophen (Tylenol). Hospitalization is sometimes required in severe cases and should be considered for pregnant women.

How can hepatitis E be prevented?

Prevention of hepatitis E mostly relies on good sanitation and clean drinking water. Travelers to developing countries can reduce their risk of infection by only drinking purified water. Boiling and chlorination of water will kill the Hepatitis E virus (HEV).

Avoiding raw pork and venison can also help reduce the risk of getting hepatitis E.

Is there a vaccine for hepatitis E?

There is currently no FDA-approved vaccine for hepatitis E.

Can hepatitis E become chronic?

To date, there is no report of chronic hepatitis E in developing countries. In developed countries, the only chronic cases of hepatitis E are among people who have had an organ transplant and are on immunosuppressive treatment.

Where can I get more information?

- Your personal healthcare provider
- Utah Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology, 801-538-6191
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)