

REYE SYNDROME

What is Reye Syndrome?

Reye Syndrome is a rare condition that may follow an upper respiratory infection or a case of varicella (chickenpox). People with Reye Syndrome have nausea, vomiting and a change in mental status. To be diagnosed as Reye Syndrome, an illness must meet the following criteria:

- Acute, noninflammatory encephalopathy (disease of the brain) that is documented clinically by a) an alteration in consciousness and, if available, b) a record of the cerebrospinal fluid containing less than or equal to 8 white blood cells/cubic millimeter or a histologic specimen of the brain demonstrating cerebral edema (swelling) without perivascular or meningeal inflammation
- Hepatopathy (disease of the liver) documented by either a) a liver biopsy or an autopsy considered to be diagnostic of Reye Syndrome or b) a threefold or greater increase in the levels serum glutamic-oxaloacetic transaminase (SGOT), serum glutamic-pyruvic transaminase (SGPT), or serum ammonia
- No more reasonable explanation for the brain and liver abnormalities

Who gets Reye Syndrome?

Reye Syndrome is most common among school-age children.

How is Reye Syndrome diagnosed?

There is no specific laboratory test to diagnose Reye Syndrome. A case of Reye Syndrome is *confirmed* when a case meets the clinical case definition.

How can Reye Syndrome be prevented?

Children who have an upper respiratory infection or varicella should not be given aspirin or aspirin-containing products without specific physician instructions to administer these medicines.

Where can I get more information?

- Your personal doctor.
- Your local health department listed in your telephone directory.
- The Utah Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology (801) 538-6191.