Hepatitis D: What You Need to Know

What is Hepatitis D?

Hepatitis D, also known as “delta hepatitis,” is a liver infection caused by the hepatitis D virus (HDV).

Hepatitis D can be an acute, short-term infection or become a longer term, chronic infection.

Basic Facts

- Hepatitis D only occurs in people who are also infected with the hepatitis B virus
- Hepatitis D is known as a “satellite virus,” because it can only infect people who are also infected by the hepatitis B virus

Hepatitis D infection is uncommon in the United States. Most cases occur among people who migrate or travel to the United States from countries that have high HDV prevalence.

Source: cdc.gov
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How it Spreads
- Sex with an infected partner
- Injection-drug use that involves sharing needles, syringes, or drug-preparation equipment
- When an HDV-infected mother gives birth (rare)
- Contact with blood from an infected person's open sores
- Needle sticks or exposures to sharp instruments that have been exposed to HDV
- Sharing items (e.g., razors and toothbrushes) with an infected person

Symptoms
Fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, clay-colored bowel movements, joint pain, and jaundice.

Diagnosis & Treatment
People with hepatitis B are recommended to get tested for hepatitis D. If you are experiencing symptoms of hepatitis D, visit your healthcare provider. A blood test is needed to detect infection with the virus that causes hepatitis D.

Prevention
Although no vaccine is available for hepatitis D, vaccination with the hepatitis B vaccine can protect people from hepatitis D infection.

Hepatitis D is not spread through food or water, sharing utensils, breastfeeding, hugging, kissing, hand-holding, coughing, or sneezing.

Source: cdc.gov