

Hepatitis D

Hepatitis D, also known as “delta hepatitis,” is a liver infection caused by the hepatitis D virus (HDV). Hepatitis D only occurs in people who are also infected with the hepatitis B virus. Hepatitis D can be an acute, short-term infection or become a long-term, chronic infection.

Transmission

HDV is spread via

- **Person to person** through contact with blood or body fluids (e.g., semen and saliva),
 - Sex with an infected partner
 - Contact with blood from or the open sores of an infected person
 - Birth to an infected mother (rare)
- **Environment to person** through activities that involve punctures through the skin. This may include:
 - Injection-drug use that involves sharing needles, syringes, or drug-preparation equipment
 - Sharing items (e.g., razors and toothbrushes) with an infected person

Symptoms

The symptoms of short-term HDV infection:

- **Fever**
- **Fatigue**
- **Loss of appetite**
- **Nausea**
- **Vomiting**
- **Abdominal pain**
- **Dark urine**
- **Clay-colored bowel movements**
- **Joint pain**
- **Jaundice**

Symptoms typically appear three-seven weeks after the initial infection.

Diagnosis

Hepatitis D is not easy to tell apart from other types of short-term viral hepatitis. Therefore, a diagnosis can be confirmed only by testing for the presence of antibodies against HDV and/or HDV RNA.

Treatment

No treatment is available for HDV infection. specifically. In cases of fulminant hepatitis (acute liver failure) and end-stage liver disease, liver transplantation may be considered.

Prevention

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

For more information about the treatment of hepatitis D visit [Hepatitis D - FAQs and Laboratory Testing Requests | CDC](#). If you have further questions about the treatment of your hepatitis D, contact your health-care provider.

Exclusion Guidance

Individuals with hepatitis D should not be excluded from work, school, or child care unless the [general exclusions apply](#).

For additional information about hepatitis D, contact the North Dakota Health and Human Services' Public Health Division at 800.427.2180.

Resources:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, June 22). *Hepatitis D - faqs and laboratory testing requests*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hdv/index.htm>