# Hepatitis E Facts and Information

Hepatitis E is a viral infection that attacks the liver and causes inflammation and makes the person very ill.

October 30, 2019 By Connie M. Welch

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There are two types of hepatitis that cause acute infections (infections lasting less than 6 months), these types are Hepatitis A and E.

Hepatitis E does not typically occur in the U.S. though it is found worldwide, the disease is most common in East and South Asia.

The World Health Organization reports, each year, there are an estimated 20 million hepatitis E infections worldwide, leading to an estimated 3.3 million symptomatic cases of hepatitis E. WHO estimates that hepatitis E caused approximately 44 000 deaths in 2015 (accounting for 3.3% of the mortality due to viral hepatitis).

In the U.S. there are fewer than 20,000 cases reported each year.

For information on all types of hepatitis, see this article: What Are the Different Types of Hepatitis?

Transmission

Hepatitis E is a virus much like Hep A in that it is typically transmitted by drinking contaminated water, or by an infected person's stool, oral-anal contact. It can also be transmitted by eating undercooked pork or wild game.

Symptoms

- Mild fever
- Reduced appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting which could last for days
- Possible Abdominal Pain
- Itching without skin lesions, or skin rash
- Joint pain

- Possible jaundice (yellow coloring of the skin and eyes)
- Dark urine
- Pale stools
- Possible slightly enlarged liver

The World Health Organization states these symptoms are often indistinguishable from those experienced during other liver illness. Symptoms can last 1 to 6 weeks.

## Treatment

It is recommended to be seen by a physician and testing to confirm hepatitis E. In some rare cases, hepatitis E can cause long term liver damage, but typically it can resolve within 1 to 6 weeks.

Treatment for hepatitis E is limited but mainly focused on rest, plenty of hydration, and supportive care. Treatment with ribavirin has reported to help.

There is no vaccine for hepatitis E in the U.S. A vaccine to prevent hepatitis E has been developed and licensed in China, but not available in other countries.

## Prevention

Recommended practice of good hygiene and avoid drinking tap water when traveling internationally helps lessen chances of contracting hepatitis E.

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