



Viral Hepatitis

Hepatitis is a term that refers to liver inflammation, and several different viruses, including Hepatitis A, B, and C, can cause it. These three types of hepatitis have some similarities, but they also have many differences, particularly in how they are spread, their symptoms, and their treatment.

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is a highly contagious liver infection caused by the Hepatitis A virus. This virus is commonly transmitted through the ingestion of food or water that has been contaminated with the feces of an infected person. It can also be spread through close personal contact with an infected person. Unlike other types of hepatitis, Hepatitis A does not cause long-term liver damage, and most people recover completely. A safe and effective vaccine is available to protect against Hepatitis A.

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a serious liver infection caused by the Hepatitis B virus. It can be spread through contact with an infected person's blood and other body fluids. This can happen through sharing needles, syringes, or other equipment to inject drugs, through sexual contact, or from mother to child at birth. Hepatitis B can range from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a serious, long-term, chronic condition that can lead to liver disease or liver cancer. A safe and effective vaccine is also available that can protect against Hepatitis B.

Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C is a liver infection caused by the Hepatitis C virus. It is a bloodborne virus that is commonly spread through direct contact with an infected person's blood. This can happen through sharing needles, syringes, or other equipment to inject drugs. Unlike Hepatitis A and B, there is no vaccine for Hepatitis C. However, treatment can cure most cases of Hepatitis C. In terms of symptoms, all three types of hepatitis can cause fatigue, nausea, abdominal pain, and jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes). However, many people with Hepatitis B and C do not have symptoms and do not know they are infected.

Diagnosis

The diagnosis of all three conditions involves a blood test. For Hepatitis A and B, the test looks for antibodies to the respective viruses, which the body produces in response to the infection.

For Hepatitis C, the test looks for antibodies to the Hepatitis C virus, and if these are present, further tests may be done to determine if the infection is acute or chronic.

Treatment

1. Treatment for Hepatitis A usually involves supportive care to help manage symptoms, including rest, proper nutrition, and staying hydrated.
2. For Hepatitis B, antiviral medications can help slow the progression of the disease.
3. For Hepatitis C, antiviral drugs can often cure the infection.

In conclusion, Hepatitis A, B, and C are serious but manageable diseases. Understanding these diseases' causes, symptoms, diagnoses, and treatments is the first step toward managing them effectively. If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with hepatitis, remember that you are not alone; resources and treatments are available to help you.

Center For Digestive Health & Nutrition

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The Center for Digestive Health & Nutrition is a private medical practice comprised of experienced Gastroenterologists, Nurse Practitioners, and staff members dedicated to preventing and treating digestive disorders. Our physicians have been serving the needs of those in Western Pennsylvania and surrounding areas since 1977, having cared for tens of thousands of individuals with digestive problems. Our mission is to deliver high-quality gastroenterology services efficiently and cost-consciously. We realize the very sensitive nature of GI illness and understand the necessity to provide our services in an environment that stresses patient privacy and confidentiality and where patient satisfaction is the goal. Appointments can be conveniently scheduled online via our website above. Learn more about digestive issues on Instagram @thedigestivetract

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