



## Liver Hepatitis: Causes, Types, and Diagnosis Techniques

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### Description

Liver hepatitis refers to inflammation of the liver. This condition has various causes, but it is most commonly associated with viral infections. Hepatitis can lead to severe liver damage and, it can contribute to chronic liver disease cirrhosis, and liver cancer.

### Types of liver hepatitis

Hepatitis, characterized by inflammation of the liver, can result from a wide range of causes. The most common causes are viral infections, with hepatitis viruses A, B, C, D, and E probably the most recognized. These viruses differ in their transmission methods, severity, and long-term consequences.

**Hepatitis A (HAV):** Transmitted through contaminated food and water, HAV is frequently acute and generally improves to chronic hepatitis. It typically causes flu-like symptoms, jaundice, and is preventable through vaccination.

**Hepatitis B (HBV):** HBV can be acute or chronic and is transmitted through contact with infected blood, bodily fluids, or from mother to child during childbirth. Chronic HBV infection can lead to cirrhosis and liver cancer.

**Hepatitis C (HCV):** HCV is usually chronic and transmitted primarily through exposure to infected blood. Left untreated, it can develop to cirrhosis and liver cancer. Antiviral therapeutic advancements have improved the outcome.

**Hepatitis D (HDV):** HDV is a typical virus that can only infect those with an existing HBV infection. It improves HBV's prognosis and can result in more severe liver damage.

**Hepatitis E (HEV):** HEV, similar to HAV, is typically acute and spread through contaminated water and food. It's common in areas with insufficient sanitation and can cause severe illness in pregnant women.

### Common symptoms of hepatitis

The symptoms of hepatitis can vary depending on the type of hepatitis and the stage of the infection. However, some general symptoms may include:

**Jaundice:** Yellowing of the skin and eyes due to the accumulation of the substance, a pigment produced during the breakdown of red blood cells.

**Fatigue:** A common symptom of hepatitis, frequently accompanied by weakness and low energy levels.

**Abdominal pain:** Discomfort or pain in the upper-right part of the abdomen, the area of the liver.

**Dark urine:** Urine may become dark or tea-colored due to the presence of substance.

**Pale stools:** Hepatitis can cause light-colored or pale stools due to a decrease in bilirubin in the stool.

**Loss of appetite:** Individuals with hepatitis frequently experience a decreased appetite and weight loss.

**Nausea and vomiting:** Digestive symptoms such as nausea and vomiting can occur, particularly in acute hepatitis.

**Fever:** A mild fever is a common symptom of acute hepatitis.

**Joint pain:** Joint pain and discomfort can occur, especially in the case of hepatitis C.

**Itchy skin:** Pruritus or itchy skin is a common symptom, particularly in chronic hepatitis.

### Diagnosis and screening

The diagnosis of hepatitis involves a combination of clinical evaluation, blood tests, and imaging studies. These diagnostic tools help to determine the type of hepatitis, assess its severity, and plan appropriate treatment.

**Blood tests:** Hepatitis can be diagnosed by analyzing blood samples. Specific tests can detect the presence of hepatitis viruses, determine the viral load, and assess liver function. For example, liver enzymes such as Alanine Aminotransferase (ALT) and Aspartate Aminotransferase (AST) can be elevated in hepatitis.

**Imaging studies:** Imaging techniques such as ultrasound, CT scans, or MRI may be used to assess the liver's size and structure. They can reveal the extent of liver damage and identify any complications, such as cirrhosis or liver cancer.

**Liver biopsy:** In some cases, a liver biopsy may be recommended to assess the extent of liver damage and fibrosis. However, this invasive procedure is increasingly being replaced by non-invasive methods, such as fibro scan and blood-based tests.

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