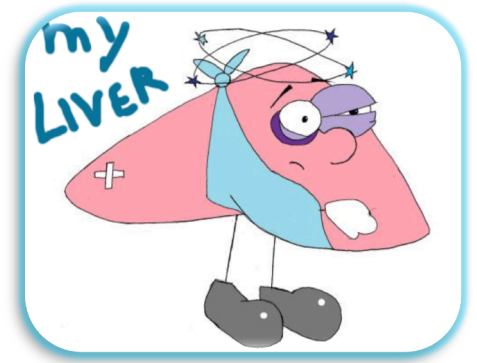


Viral Hepatitis: A through E

What Is Viral Hepatitis?

Viral hepatitis is inflammation of the liver caused by a virus. Several different viruses, named the hepatitis A, B, C, D, and E viruses, cause viral hepatitis. All of these viruses cause acute, or short-term, viral hepatitis. The hepatitis B, C, and D viruses can also cause chronic hepatitis, in which the infection is prolonged, sometimes lifelong. Chronic hepatitis can lead to cirrhosis, liver failure, and liver cancer.



What Are The Symptoms Of Viral Hepatitis?

Symptoms include jaundice (which causes a yellowing of the skin and eyes), fatigue abdominal pain, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, low grade fever and headache. However, some people do not have symptoms.

How Does Hepatitis Spread?

Hepatitis A: Spreads primarily through food or water contaminated by feces from an infected person. Rarely, it spreads through contact with infected blood.

Hepatitis B: Spreads through contact with infected blood, through sex with an infected person, and from mother to child during childbirth, whether the delivery is vaginal or via cesarean section.

Hepatitis C: Spreads primarily through contact with infected blood. Less commonly, it can spread through sexual contact and childbirth.

Hepatitis D: Spreads through contact with infected blood. This disease only occurs at the same time as infection with hepatitis B or in people who are already infected with hepatitis B.

Hepatitis E: Spreads through food or water contaminated by feces from an infected person.

Which Laboratory Tests Are Required For Viral Hepatitis?

Liver function tests (SGOT, SGPT, Bilirubin, Albumin), Prothrombin Time and blood sugar must be done along with viral serology.

Viral serology includes:

- Hepatitis A antigen and an antibody against hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B antigens (surface and core antigens) and an antibody against hepatitis B (surface antigen and e-antigen)
- An antibody against hepatitis C
- Presence of a newly made antibody (called IgM antibody, which, if present means that you just recently became infected), as well as an antibody from prior exposure to a virus or a vaccine (IgG antibody).