



Hepatitis E Fact Sheet

Cause	<p>Hepatitis E virus (HEV) First identified in 1983 HEV is a small, single-stranded, non-enveloped RNA virus There are at least four identifiable genotypes of HEV, but only one serotype Genotypes are identified based on geographic origin</p>														
Clinical Characteristics	<p>Incubation Period From 15 to 60 days Acute Illness In adults aged 15-40, HEV causes severe hepatitis, but the body will usually fight off HEV naturally. Severity increases with age. Chronic Infection HEV does not lead to long-term hepatitis, and the virus does not cause liver damage or cancer of the liver.</p> <p>Infection with HEV is much more common in adults than children. It is regularly found in most developing countries. The death rate from HEV in the general population of these countries is between 0.2 and 4.0%. The death rate in pregnant women is much higher, between 15 and 25% There are possible animal (zoonotic) reservoirs of HEV. These include pigs and rats.</p>														
Signs and Symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes), other general symptoms such as uneasiness, loss of appetite, pain in the stomach area, and inflammation of the liver. » HEV can be found in the fecal matter beginning around 1 week before the onset of illness, and continues for as long as 2 weeks after that. » Around 90% of children under the age of 10 infected with HEV who live in areas where the virus is regularly found show no symptoms. » Most individuals recover from HEV within 1 to 6 weeks. » More persistent cases of HEV usually resolve within 6 months without evidence of long-term HEV. 														
Modes of Transmission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Exposure to water or food products contaminated with HEV (feces containing the virus) » Person-to-person (horizontal) transmission is uncommon » Mother-to-newborn child (vertical) transmission is likely » No evidence of transmission through sharing personal items contaminated with the virus » No evidence of transmission through sexual activities 														
Persons at Risk	<table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><u>Persons</u></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><u>Level of Risk</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>People who reside in subtropical areas (including South Asia, North Africa, and Central America)</td> <td>High</td> </tr> <tr> <td>People with a low social or economic status who are living in areas where the virus is regularly found</td> <td>High</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Patients on maintenance hemodialysis</td> <td>Medium</td> </tr> <tr> <td>People who inject drugs</td> <td>Medium</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Patients with markers for other viral bloodborne infections</td> <td>Medium</td> </tr> <tr> <td>People who travel to areas where the virus is regularly found</td> <td>Low</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<u>Persons</u>	<u>Level of Risk</u>	People who reside in subtropical areas (including South Asia, North Africa, and Central America)	High	People with a low social or economic status who are living in areas where the virus is regularly found	High	Patients on maintenance hemodialysis	Medium	People who inject drugs	Medium	Patients with markers for other viral bloodborne infections	Medium	People who travel to areas where the virus is regularly found	Low
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Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Improve hygienic conditions in areas where HEV is regularly found. » Detect sources of HEV and avoid contact. 														
Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » There is no treatment for HEV » Hospitalization for people who are seriously ill in order to treat symptoms. » HEV is an illness that the body can usually fight off naturally. There is no accepted therapy, nor restrictions to diet or activity. 														
Canadian Data on the Trends of HEV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Because it is rarely seen in Canada, HEV is not a Notifiable Disease according to Canadian National Surveillance. 														