

Hepatitis delta – explained in a simple way

The liver and its functions

The liver is the body's central metabolic organ. It fulfils a **wide range of functions**, such as serving as

- an energy store
- a detoxification station
- a conversion station for nutrients
- a control station for the sugar and hormone levels in the blood
- a production station for blood components and bile
- a guard station for the body's immune defence



This is why it is so important to **keep the liver healthy** and to help it to continue to do its job when it is sick.

What is hepatitis D?

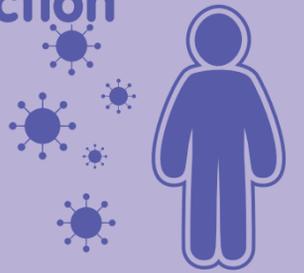
Hepatitis D is a **viral disease of the liver**. This can run either an acute or a chronic course: What is important to know is that you can only become infected with the hepatitis D virus (HDV) if the hepatitis B virus (HBV) is present. A distinction can be made here between **two possibilities of becoming infected**:



- **Simultaneous infection:** infection with HBV and HDV occurs at the same time
- **Superinfection:** infection with HBV occurs first and then, at a later stage, infection with HDV*

Protecting against infection

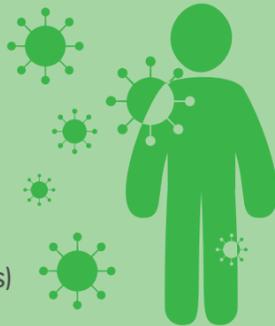
- A person who is familiar with the **transmission routes** can in principle also protect themselves from an infection.
- The **hepatitis B vaccine** offers protection against infection.



Transmission routes

There are **three main transmission routes / risk factors**:

1. Transmission **at birth** from mother to child
2. Transmission through **infected blood** (blood transfusions), and/or by sharing:
 - acupuncture needles and syringes
 - sharp or sharp-edged objects such as in the case of tattooing and piercings
 - personal hygiene articles such as tooth-brushes and razors
 - equipment for drug usage (syringes, sniff tubes)
3. **Sexual transmission** (if the sexual partner has an HDV infection)



HDV and HBV have the same transmission routes. In Western Europe, approximately 5–12% of people with a chronic HBV infection are also infected with HDV.*

Symptoms**

Just like an HBV infection, an HDV infection is usually **asymptomatic**.

Possible symptoms of an **acute HDV infection** include the following:

- Fatigue
- Jaundice (icterus)
- Nausea
- Fever
- Loss of appetite



Possible symptoms of a **chronic HDV infection** include the following:

- Feeling unwell
- Loss of appetite
- Exhaustion
- A feeling of pressure in the right upper part of the abdomen
- Dark urine and light-coloured stools
- Jaundice (icterus)

Testing and diagnosis

- Hepatitis D can only be diagnosed when virus components or antibodies are detected. For this purpose, a doctor must draw **blood**, which is then analysed in a laboratory. If the **antibody test** comes back positive, a second test, the **PCR test**, is carried out.*

- It makes sense to have your **general practitioner carry out a test** if you have an existing HBV infection or if you are concerned about potential transmission through an HDV carrier.



On our **information page about the project**, you can find a list of general practitioners where you can get tested.

Tips for a healthy liver

- **A healthy and balanced diet** (very little sugary, fatty and salty foods)
- Regular **physical activity**
- Avoiding **alcohol and tobacco consumption**
- Maintaining a **healthy weight**



Consequences of an untreated hepatitis D viral infection (Therapy monitoring)*

- Hepatitis denotes an **inflammation of the cells of the liver**. Failure to recognise and treat hepatitis D leaves the liver permanently exposed to this inflammation.
- In reaction to this, the body initially builds up non-functional connective tissue in the liver. This increased formation of connective tissue is called **fibrosis**.
- Should the inflammatory process advance, more and more liver cells die off, thereby causing scar tissue. This scarring is called **cirrhosis**.
- In the case of advanced cirrhosis of the liver, the liver is no longer able to adequately fulfil its functions, resulting in **further health complications** up to the point of **liver failure**. The risk of **liver cancer** also increases when cirrhosis is present.



Early detection, treatment and monitoring of hepatitis D is vital to prevent the disease from becoming severe.

content liability:

Kautz⁵ gUG
Hauptstraße 335 · 51143 Köln
post@kautzhoch5.de · www.kautzhoch5.de

KAUTZ⁵
gemeinnützige Projekt- und
Beratungsgesellschaft für patientenzentrierte
Versorgungsforschung und Gesundheitskonzepte

in cooperation with:

World Hepatitis Alliance

with kind support of:

MYR MYR
Pharmaceuticals
MYR GmbH ist jetzt eine Tochtergesellschaft von Gilead Sciences, Inc.