



The Alphabet of Hepatitis

Hepatitis, meaning “inflammation of the liver,” usually causes swelling and tenderness of the liver. In severe cases, permanent damage can result. Liver disease is the third leading cause of disease-related deaths in adults aged 25-59 years. The disease is partly a result of our “modern” lifestyle—for example, rich, fatty and highly processed foods as well as food additives; environmental toxins from motor vehicles and industrial plants; the use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs; contamination during international travel; and multiple sexual contacts.

- ◆ Viral hepatitis is the most common cause of serious contagious diseases in the United States.
- ◆ There are at least seven types of viral hepatitis known today:
 - Hepatitis A—an acute form of hepatitis contracted from contaminated water or transmitted via oral, anal and possibly vaginal sex.
 - Hepatitis B—an acute and chronic form of disease spread by blood transfusion, contaminated needles and sexual contact.
 - Hepatitis C—an acute and chronic form transmitted by blood transfusion or contaminated needles (infrequently by sexual contact).
 - Hepatitis D—a condition that can occur only in patients who already have hepatitis B, this virus is also spread via blood transfusion or contaminated needles.
 - Hepatitis E—an acute form of disease similar to hepatitis A in the way it is transmitted but it is less common in the United States.
 - Hepatitis G & GB—recently discovered forms of virus which do not appear to cause serious liver disease.
- ◆ Common symptoms of hepatitis include fatigue, mild fever, muscle/joint aches, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain.
- ◆ See your doctor if you experience persistent symptoms of this type, or if you think you have been exposed to viral hepatitis.

For more information about hepatitis ... ask your pharmacist!

Brought to you by your local pharmacist and prepared by
the Michigan Pharmacists Association.

