



REYE SYNDROME

What is Reye syndrome?

Reye syndrome is a rare but serious condition that can occur after a viral infection. It affects all organs but swelling and damage to the liver and brain are most prominent.

Who gets Reye syndrome?

Anyone can get Reye syndrome, but it mostly affects children and teenagers recovering from a viral infection such as chickenpox or the flu. Evidence suggests that aspirin and other salicylates triggers Reye syndrome.

How is Reye syndrome spread?

Reye syndrome itself is not spread from person-to-person.

What are the symptoms of Reye syndrome?

Reye syndrome symptoms vary by age. Children younger than 2 years old may develop diarrhea and rapid breathing. Older children and teenagers may develop persistent or continuous vomiting and fatigue. Symptoms that require emergency treatment include aggressive or irrational behavior, confusion, disorientation, hallucinations, loss of consciousness, weakness or paralysis in the arms and legs, seizures, excessive lethargy, and decreased level of consciousness.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms typically appear three to five days after the onset of a viral infection.

Should a person with Reye syndrome be excluded from work or school?

A person with Reye syndrome does not need to be excluded from work or school unless they have a fever. They can return after not having a fever for 24 hours.

What is the treatment for Reye syndrome?

Reye syndrome is typically treated in a hospital with intravenous fluids (IV), diuretics, medication to prevent bleeding, and cooling blankets.

What can a person or community do to prevent the spread of Reye syndrome?

The best way to prevent Reye syndrome is to prevent the viral infection that triggers it. Wash your hands often, especially after coughing or sneezing, and before preparing foods or eating. Consult with the child's pediatrician before administering any aspirin or anti-nausea medicines during a viral illness.



*DELAWARE HEALTH
AND SOCIAL SERVICES*
Division of Public Health

Frequently Asked Questions

Resources

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke,
<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/reyes-syndrome>

Mayo Clinic, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/reyes-syndrome/symptoms-causes/syc-20377255>

Office of Infectious Disease Epidemiology
24/7 Emergency Contact Number: 1-888-295-5156

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