

What is Hepatitis D?

Hepatitis D is a liver infection caused by the hepatitis D virus (HDV) that results in the most severe form of viral hepatitis. Only hepatitis B (HBV) patients can contract hepatitis D, and 1 in 20 people with HBV are estimated to be coinfecting with HDV.

Why Should I Test My HBV Patients for HDV?

Hepatitis D can cause more rapid progression to cirrhosis and liver cancer than patients infected with hepatitis B alone. HBV/HDV patients will require different treatment recommendations to manage their co-infection.

Who Should Be Tested?

- Patients originating from Africa, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Mongolia, Pakistan or Central Asia
- Patients who are on treatment for HBV but are not responding to treatment or have abnormal liver tests
- Patients with cirrhosis



How Can I Test my Patients?

Start with the HDV antibody test, which is the first step in diagnosing an HBV/HDV coinfection. If the antibody test is positive, this should be followed up with an HDV RNA test to confirm a current infection. Testing is available from:

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), [ARUP Laboratories](#), [Quest Diagnostics](#).

How Can I Manage an HBV/HDV Patient?

Patients are often prescribed pegylated interferon, which for a long time was the only treatment shown to help suppress the hepatitis D infection and help prevent liver damage. In July of 2020, the European Medicines Agency approved prescription of Hepcludex for hepatitis delta, which will hopefully start to be available in more parts of the world in 2021-