

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 people who are living with or at risk for hepatitis B 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 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, India, Pakistan, Central Asia, or the Amazonian River Basin
- 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 prescribed pegylated interferon alpha (until recently, the only treatment available to suppress hepatitis D virus). In July 2020, the European Medicines Agency approved Hepcludex for HDV - this will hopefully be available in more parts of the world in 2023. A [variety of other drugs](#) are in the research pipeline as well. You can find currently enrolling clinical trials [here](#).