



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

A rare disease that involves the brain, liver, and other major organs. It can occur at any age, but it most often affects children and young teenagers.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Vomiting.
- Lethargy.
- Drowsiness.
- Confusion.
- Delirium.
- Personality changes (such as irritability).
- Seizures.
- Arm or leg weakness, or unable to move them.
- Double vision.
- Speech problems.
- Coma.

CAUSES

Unknown. Reye's syndrome usually occurs following a virus infection. Studies link most cases to the use of salicylate drugs, such as aspirin, during a viral illness, especially chickenpox and influenza.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Recent illness, such as chickenpox, influenza, or other respiratory illness.
- Use of aspirin with the viral illness.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Don't give a child under the age of 18 aspirin for fever until it has been diagnosed. If the illness is diagnosed as viral, never use aspirin.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Some patients will have a mild illness with complete recovery. Others may have more severe symptoms and develop varying degrees of brain damage. Early diagnosis is important to help prevent complications.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Pneumonia.
- Respiratory failure.
- Heart rhythm problems or heart attack.
- Seizures.
- Permanent brain damage, coma, or death caused by pressure on the brain.



DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- Your health care provider will do a physical exam. Medical tests may include blood studies of liver function and a study of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF). An EEG (electroencephalogram, which measures electrical activity of the brain) may be done.
- There is no specific treatment that will cure the disorder. Hospital intensive care is needed. Treatment steps are aimed at preventing complications such as swelling of the brain. This may involve inserting a feeding tube, intravenous (IV) fluids, urinary catheter, mechanical breathing support, kidney dialysis, blood transfusion, cardiovascular (heart and blood vessel) monitoring, and therapies to reduce pressure on the brain.
- To learn more: National Reye's Syndrome Foundation, 426 N. Lewis, P.O. Box 829, Bryan, OH 43506, (800) 233-7393; website: www.reyessyndrome.org.

MEDICATIONS

- Your health care provider may prescribe:
 - Steroids or other drugs to reduce pressure and swelling of the brain.
 - Diuretics to help remove excess fluid from the body.
 - Glucose solutions to maintain normal levels of glucose.

ACTIVITY

Bed rest is needed until the symptoms improve. Normal activities may then be resumed gradually.

DIET

Nothing by mouth at first. After recovery, no special diet is required.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- Your child has symptoms of Reye's syndrome. Call at the first sign of confusion, lethargy, or other mental changes!
- After hospital care, any symptoms of Reye's syndrome recur or the child develops a fever.
- New, unexplained symptoms develop. Drugs used in treatment may produce side effects.

Special notes:

More notes on the back of this page