



[Home](#) → [Medical Encyclopedia](#) → Hepatic ischemia

URL of this page: [//medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000214.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000214.htm)

Hepatic ischemia

Hepatic ischemia is a condition in which the liver does not get enough blood or oxygen. This causes injury to liver cells.

Causes

Low blood pressure from any condition can lead to hepatic ischemia. Such conditions may include:

- Abnormal heart rhythms
- Dehydration
- Heart failure
- Infection, especially sepsis
- Severe bleeding

Other causes may include:

- Blood clots in the main artery to the liver (hepatic artery) after a liver transplant
- Inflammation of blood vessels, leading to reduced blood flow (vasculitis)
- Burns
- Heat stroke
- Having a sickle cell crisis

Symptoms

The person may have an altered mental status due to reduced blood flow to the brain. Other symptoms may include:

- Loss of appetite
- Feeling of general discomfort
- Discomfort in the right upper quadrant of your abdomen
- Jaundice

Damage to the liver cells most often does not cause symptoms until it affects liver function.

Blood clots in the liver's main artery may cause abdominal pain.

Exams and Tests

The following tests will be done:

- Blood tests to check liver function (AST and ALT). These readings can be very high (in the thousands) with ischemia.
- Doppler ultrasound of the blood vessels of the liver.

Treatment

Treatment depends on the cause. Low blood pressure and blood clots must be treated right away.

Outlook (Prognosis)

People generally recover if the illness causing hepatic ischemia can be treated. Death from liver failure due to hepatic ischemia is very rare.

Possible Complications

Liver failure is a rare, but fatal complication.

When to Contact a Medical Professional

Contact your health care provider right away if you have persistent weakness or symptoms of shock or dehydration.

Prevention

Quickly treating the causes of low blood pressure may prevent hepatic ischemia.

Alternative Names

Ischemic hepatitis; Shock liver

References

Korenblat KM. Approach to the patient with jaundice or abnormal liver tests. In: Goldman L, Cooney KA, eds. *Goldman-Cecil Medicine*. 27th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier; 2024:chap 133.

Nery FG, Valla DC. Vascular diseases of the liver. In: Feldman M, Friedman LS, Brandt LJ, eds. *Sleisenger and Fordtran's Gastrointestinal and Liver Disease*. 11th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier; 2021:chap 85.

Review Date 5/14/2024

Updated by: Jenifer K. Lehrer, MD, Department of Gastroenterology, Aria - Jefferson Health Torresdale, Jefferson Digestive Diseases Network, Philadelphia, PA. Review provided by VeriMed Healthcare Network. Also reviewed by David C. Dugdale, MD, Medical Director, Brenda Conaway, Editorial Director, and the A.D.A.M. Editorial team.

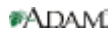
Learn how to cite this page



Health Content
Provider
06/01/2028

A.D.A.M., Inc. is accredited by [URAC](http://www.urac.org), for Health Content Provider (www.urac.org). URAC's [accreditation program](#) is an independent audit to verify that A.D.A.M. follows rigorous standards of quality and accountability. A.D.A.M. is among the first to achieve this important distinction for online health information and services. Learn more about A.D.A.M.'s [editorial policy](#), [editorial process](#), and [privacy policy](#).

The information provided herein should not be used during any medical emergency or for the diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. A licensed medical professional should be consulted for diagnosis and treatment of any and all medical conditions. Links to other sites are provided for information only – they do not constitute endorsements of those other sites. No warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied, is made as to the accuracy, reliability, timeliness, or correctness of any translations made by a third-party service of the information provided herein into any other language. © 1997-2025 A.D.A.M., a business unit of Ebix, Inc. Any duplication or distribution of the information contained herein is strictly prohibited.



National Library of Medicine 8600 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD 20894 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
National Institutes of Health