



Reye's Syndrome

What is Reye's syndrome?

Reye's syndrome is a rare and severe childhood illness that can affect the blood, liver, and brain of someone who has recently had a viral infection. This syndrome normally follows another illness, and can be fatal but is not contagious. It is most common during flu season. Although it mostly affects children and teens, anyone can get it. It usually strikes children under the age of 15 who are recovering from certain viral infections, such as chicken pox or influenza.

What are the symptoms of Reye's syndrome?

Symptoms include: nausea and vomiting, listlessness, personality change (such as irritability, combativeness or confusion), delirium, convulsions and loss of consciousness. These symptoms occur soon after a viral illness. Seek medical attention immediately if these symptoms occur.

What is the cause of Reye's syndrome?

The cause of Reye's syndrome is unknown, but studies have found a link with the use of aspirin during a viral illness. For this reason, aspirin should not be given without a health care provider's approval to any child under the age of 20.

Is there a treatment for Reye's syndrome?

A child diagnosed with Reye's syndrome would be treated in a hospital. Early treatment increases the chance of a full recovery.

For more information, call the Guilford County Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Division at 336-641-7777 or visit www.guilfordcountync.gov/our-county/human-services/health-department or Medline Plus at <https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001565.htm>

Free language assistance is available upon request.