

Infectious Diseases; Causes, Symptoms and Complications

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Description

Infectious diseases can be caused by a large number of pathogens, including bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites that can cause illness and disease. In humans, transmission of viruses can take many forms; spreads from person to person through direct contact, water or foodborne illness or aerosolization of infected particles in the area and by insects such as mosquitoes and ticks. Symptoms and signs and treatment of infectious conditions depend on the person being infected and the pathogen [1-5].

Causes

Infectious diseases in humans are caused by microorganisms including:

- Viruses that attack and increase healthy cells
- Bacteria or microorganisms that can cause disease
- Fungus, which includes many types of fungi
- Parasites, which are organisms that live inside their bodies that cause illness.

Infectious diseases are spread in more than one way. In many cases, direct contact with a sick person through skin-to-skin contact (including sexual contact) or by touching another person, transmits the disease to a new person. Contact with body fluids, such as blood and saliva, also spreads infectious diseases.

Many diseases are spread by droplets that come out of a sick person's body when he coughs or sneezes. These droplets stay in the air for a short time, landing on a healthy person's skin or inhaled into their lungs.

In some cases, infectious diseases travel through the air for a long time in small particles. Healthy people inhale these particles and later become ill. Only certain diseases are transmitted through airborne transmission, including tuberculosis and rubella virus.

Symptoms

The symptoms of an infectious disease are specific to the type of disease. For example, flu symptoms include:

- Cold
- Overcrowding
- Fatigue
- Muscle and head pain

Other infectious diseases, such as Shigella, cause more serious symptoms, including:

- Bloody diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- Fever
- Dehydration (lack of fluid)
- Shock

You may experience one or more symptoms of an infectious disease. It is important to see a doctor if you have chronic (on-going) symptoms or the symptoms get worse over time.

Complications

Many infectious diseases cause problems. These can range from mild to severe. In some cases, problems may include shortness of breath, skin rash, or extreme fatigue. Minor problems often disappear as the infection resolves.

Certain infectious diseases can cause cancer. These include hepatitis B and C (liver cancer), and Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) (cervical cancer).

Prevention

Vaccines are available to prevent many common infectious diseases, including hepatitis, diphtheria, the flu, and herpes zoster. The CDC (Centers for Disease Control) has updated vaccination recommendations for children, adolescents and adults. There are new forums for vaccination and research on new viruses. You can also reduce your risk of contact with infectious diseases by,

- Washing your hands with cleaner and water, thoroughly and regularly
- Covering the nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing
- Disinfecting shells that have been repeatedly touched in your home and work
- Avoid contact with sick people or sharing personal items with them
- Not drinking or swimming in dirty water
- Not eating or drinking food and beverages prepared by people who are sick

References

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