I just learned that there is a hepatitis E. Is there a vaccine for that?

August 13, 2019 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

Hepatitis E is a liver infection caused by hepatitis E virus (HEV). Hep E is quite common in developing countries, especially in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Central America. Although it is not often seen in the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) cites studies reporting a high prevalence of antibodies against HEV in the general population. This may indicate exposure to HEV with mild or no symptoms.

Although there is no HEV vaccine, you can take measures to reduce the risk of exposure if you travel to areas with a high HEV prevalence. Because HEV is primarily spread via the fecal-oral route, like hepatitis A, don't drink water that may be contaminated or eat uncooked or undercooked pork or deer meat. Shellfish may present a slight risk. The CDC reported possible foodborne transmission of HEV in China, Taiwan and Japan.

August is National Immunization Awareness Month. Although there isn't an HEV vaccine, you can protect yourself from hepatitis A (which is transmitted the same way), hepatitis B and other diseases.

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