

Identifying Hereditary Hemochromatosis

Men are affected by Hereditary Hemochromatosis about two to three times more frequently than women.

1 Introduction

Hereditary Hemochromatosis is a genetic disease where the body absorbs too much iron, often called an “iron overload.” The body cannot remove the extra iron and stores the excess in other organs, like the liver, heart and pancreas. The excess of iron can lead to liver disease, heart problems and even diabetes.

2 Symptoms

Symptoms can be different for each person. Men will often have more symptoms than women, but some people may never show symptoms. If symptoms are present, these are the most common:

- Abdominal pain
- Joint pain
- Fatigue and weakness
- Heart or liver failure
- Bronze or gray skin color
- Memory fog

3 Types

Hereditary hemochromatosis is classified into four types based on the age of onset, genetic cause and mode of inheritance:

- **Type 1** and **Type 4** begin in adulthood. Men typically develop symptoms between the ages of 40 and 60 while women develop symptoms after menopause.
- **Type 2**, also known as juvenile-onset disorder, begins in childhood. This type of hemochromatosis can lead to fatal heart disease by age 30 if it is not treated.
- **Type 3** is where symptoms generally begin before the age of 30.

4 Treatments

The most common treatment of this disease is through phlebotomy, the removal of blood, which helps lower the amount of iron present in the body. The amount of blood removed and the frequency of the removal depends on your age, overall health and severity of the iron overload. Treating hemochromatosis can help relieve some of the symptoms and prevent more serious conditions like liver or heart disease.

Did you know?

One of the most common genetic disorders in the US is Type 1 hemochromatosis, affecting around 1 million people.

For more information on Hereditary Hemochromatosis and supportive resources, please visit [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org)

References:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/hemochromatosis/symptoms-causes/syc-20351443>

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