



Children's Health

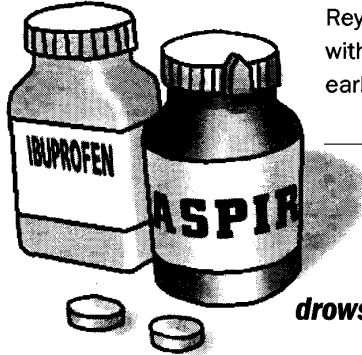
Reye's Syndrome

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Reye's syndrome is a serious disorder that may follow a viral infection, such as chicken pox, influenza or a minor respiratory illness. Reye's syndrome is considered an acute, life-threatening disorder.

When Reye's syndrome occurs, the liver begins to swell and fat deposits form. Blood sugar levels drop, high levels of ammonia and acid form in the blood and the brain swells.

ASPIRIN IS THE TRIGGER



Reye's syndrome is associated with giving aspirin to children with a viral infection. If the disorder is diagnosed and treated early, the child's chance of survival is greatest.

KNOW THE SYMPTOMS

***persistent nausea and vomiting
following a viral infection***

***drowsiness, stupor, loss of consciousness or coma
delirium, seizures or convulsions***

DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

The symptoms generally start a week after the viral infection. Nausea and vomiting for one to three days is followed by a progressive decline in a child's mental alertness. Hospitalization in an intensive care unit is often required where medications and vital signs can be monitored. Intravenous medications are administered. Glucose and electrolyte solutions are given to correct blood chemistry levels. Surgery may be necessary to reduce the pressure on the brain caused by swelling.

PREVENTION

Never give aspirin to children under 18 years of age for any illness, especially viral infections. With a few exceptions, acetaminophen or ibuprofen can be given.