

HEPATITIS B FACTSHEET

Hepatitis B is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV). HBV can be prevented with a vaccine.

WHAT IS HEPATITIS B?

Hepatitis B is a disease that attacks the liver. Hepatitis B can cause an acute, short-term illness or a chronic, life-long infection. Chronic HBV infection may go on to cause life-threatening cirrhosis (scarring of the liver), liver failure, or liver cancer. After acute HBV infection, the risk of developing chronic infection varies with age.

HOW DOES HEPATITIS B SPREAD?

Hepatitis B is spread by exposure to blood and body fluid from an acutely or chronically infected person. The hepatitis B virus (HBV) can be spread during unprotected sex, direct blood to blood contact for example, sharing syringes or drug equipment with a person infected with HBV or from a HBV infected mother to baby, usually at birth. HBV is not spread by sharing meals or utensils or casual contact, such as shaking hands, hugging, kissing, coughing, or sneezing.

SYMPTOMS

- Fatigue (tired)
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Yellow skin and eyes (jaundice)
- Dark-colored urine
- Muscle aches/Joint Pain
- Loss of appetite
- Abdominal pain

Symptoms usually occur within 60 to 90 days after exposure to HBV. Some people are asymptomatic or do not experience any symptoms of HBV. An asymptomatic person infected with HBV also known as a carrier and can infect others. **If you have any symptoms, please contact your health care provider immediately for treatment/recommendations.**

HEPATITIS B IS A VACCINE PREVENTABLE DISEASE

Routine vaccination is recommended for all newborns prior to hospital discharge, all children and teens ages 0 through 18 years, and all persons who wish to be protected from hepatitis B virus infection. Persons who are considered at higher risk (listed above) and travelers to areas where the disease is common should also be immunized. Babies born to HBV-infected mothers should get the vaccine and a shot called HBIG (hepatitis B immune globulin) within 12 hours of birth.



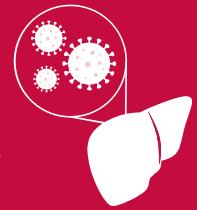
WHO SHOULD BE TESTED FOR HEPATITIS B?

A blood test is required for diagnosis of HBV. Anyone who has not gotten the vaccine can become infected with hepatitis B, but there are people who may be at greater risk including:

- Infants born to HBV-infected mothers
- Men who have sex with men
- People who share syringes or drug equipment
- Sexual contacts or close household members of a person chronically infected with HBV
- Healthcare providers and emergency responders who have exposure to blood
- People born in regions with high HBV endemicity including: Asia, Africa, South America, Pacific Islands, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East

All pregnant women should be tested for HBV during early stages of pregnancy.

If you test positive you need to know if you have a new infection, have recovered from a past infection, or if you have a chronic infection.



TREATMENT

Limited treatment is available for hepatitis B. There are no special treatments for someone who has acute HBV, however rest and avoiding alcohol and certain drugs are advised. For chronic hepatitis B medical evaluation for liver disease progression every 6-12 months is recommended and antiviral drugs are available.