



How Can You Get Hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is an infection that is spread through contact with bodily fluids: blood, saliva, semen, and vaginal secretions. The most common ways to contract hepatitis B are:



Sexual contact



Sharing toothbrushes, nail clippers, razors



Sharing needles



Sharing drug paraphernalia



Accidental needle sticks

HBV may also be passed along during childbirth by a mother who has been infected.

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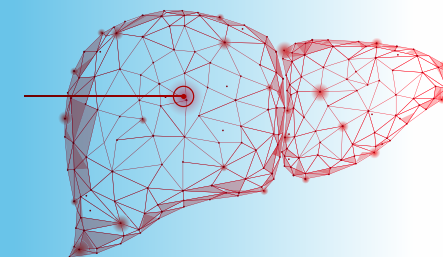
The Liver Institute

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HEPATITIS B

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What is Hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B, “HBV” is a viral infection (any illness you get from a virus) that attacks the liver causing it to swell. When this happens, the liver is unable to function properly. Hepatitis B is considered to be the most common, serious liver infection in the world.

TYPES OF HEPATITIS B

There are two types of hepatitis B infections:

- **ACUTE:** When someone is first infected, it is called an acute infection. Most healthy adults that become infected do not have symptoms and are able to get rid of the virus without any problems.
- **CHRONIC:** If a person is unable to get rid of the virus and continues to test positive after 6 months, they are diagnosed with a chronic infection.



Preventing the spread

It is important to remember that hepatitis B is not spread casually through coughing, sneezing, hugging, cooking and sharing food. It is spread through direct contact with infected blood and bodily fluids.

All sexual partners, family, and close household members living with a chronically infected person should be tested and vaccinated. Using condoms is essential to preventing transmission sexually.

How is it diagnosed?

A doctor can order a blood test that will test for the virus. The results of the blood test will: confirm the type of hepatitis, establish the severity of the infection, determine if the infection is active or dormant and whether or not you are currently contagious.

If you test positive for HBV, your doctor may order further imaging tests, such as a liver ultrasound, to determine the status of your liver hepatitis.




Common symptoms

Once infected, it may take a few months for symptoms to appear, if at all. The most common symptoms range from mild to severe:

- Fever, fatigue, muscle or joint pain
- Loss of appetite
- Mild nausea and vomiting
- Stomach pain
- Pale or light colored stools
- Dark, tea colored urine

SERIOUS SYMPTOMS

That require immediate medical attention:

-  • Severe nausea and vomiting
-  • Yellow eyes and skin (called “jaundice”)
-  • Bloating or swollen stomach

Treating Acute Hepatitis B

In acute cases, where the infection will go away on its own in under six months. Supportive care is the standard treatment. This may include rest, nutritious diet, and fluids to help alleviate symptoms. Frequent blood tests and doctor visits are also recommended to ensure the virus is resolving.

Treating Chronic Hepatitis B

There is no complete cure, but people living with a chronic hepatitis B infection should expect to live a long and healthy life. Protecting your liver from further damage is essential and may require:

LIFESTYLE MODIFICATIONS

- Avoiding alcohol & tobacco
- Eating a healthy diet
- Daily exercise & good sleep
- Seeing a liver specialist regularly (every 6 months)



MEDICATIONS

There are also approved drugs for both adults and children that control the hepatitis B virus, which helps reduce the risk of developing more serious liver disease such as cirrhosis or cancer. Talk to your provider to learn more.



Did you know?

Hep B is a lifelong disease process that requires management by a specialized provider.

Why? Individuals with chronic hepatitis B infections are at a higher risk for developing cirrhosis and liver cancer. Routine follow up care with a liver specialist is key to helping prevent disease advancement and early detection.

Early detection saves lives!

