



How do you know if you have HEPATITIS B?

Only a blood test can tell for sure. See your doctor if you have symptoms of hepatitis (e.g., extreme tiredness, loss of appetite, joint pain, yellow skin or eyes), or if you think you had direct contact with someone who has hepatitis B.

It is very important that all pregnant women get a blood test for hepatitis B early in their pregnancy, since a woman who has hepatitis B can spread the virus to her baby during birth.



You cannot get HBV from:

- sneezing or coughing
- kissing or hugging
- breast feeding
- food or water
- casual contact (such as an office setting)
- sharing eating utensils or drinking glasses

Persons depicted in these materials are models and used for illustrative purposes only.

FOR INFORMATION ON VIRAL HEPATITIS:

access our website at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis>

or write

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Division of Viral Hepatitis, Mailstop G37
Atlanta, GA 30333**

or

contact your state or local health department



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
& HUMAN SERVICES**

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PREVENT
HEPATITIS B
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GET VACCINATED



Hepatitis B is a serious disease caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV) that attacks the liver and can be spread to others.



Is HEPATITIS B a serious problem?

Yes. Each year, thousands of people of all ages get hepatitis B and about 5,000 die of chronic (life-long) liver problems caused by hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection. If you have had other types of hepatitis, such as hepatitis A or hepatitis C, you can still get hepatitis B.

HBV is spread by:

- having sex with an infected person
- direct contact with the blood of an infected person

How can you protect yourself from getting infected with HBV?

- **Get vaccinated!** Hepatitis B vaccine is safe, effective, and your best protection.
- **Practice “safer” sex.** If you are having sex, but not with one steady partner, use latex condoms correctly every time you have sex. The efficacy of latex condoms in preventing infection with HBV is unknown, but their proper use may reduce transmission.
- **Don’t share anything that might have blood on it.**
 - Don’t share drugs, needles, syringes, cookers, cotton, water, or rinse cups.
 - Don’t share personal care items, such as razors or toothbrushes.
- **Think about the health risks if you are planning to get a tattoo or body piercing.** Make sure the artist or piercer sterilizes needles and equipment, uses disposable gloves, and washes hands properly.
- **Handle needles and sharps safely.** Follow standard precautions if you have a job that exposes you to human blood.

If you shoot drugs, get help to stop or get into a treatment program.



Get HEPATITIS B vaccine if:

- you are under 19 years of age
- your sex partner has hepatitis B
- you are a man who has sex with men †
- you recently had a sexually transmitted disease (e.g., gonorrhea, syphilis)
- you have sex with more than one partner
- you shoot drugs †
- you live with someone who has chronic hepatitis B
- you have a job that exposes you to human blood
- you are a kidney dialysis patient
- you live or travel for more than 6 months in countries where hepatitis B is common

† Also get hepatitis A vaccine

Is the vaccine safe?

Yes. Hepatitis B vaccine is safe and effective. Millions of children and adults have received the vaccine worldwide since 1982.

Should you get a blood test after the vaccine series to be sure that you are protected?

Most people don’t need to get their blood tested after completing the vaccine series (usually three shots).

You should get a blood test 1 to 2 months after you complete the series if:

- your sex partner has chronic hepatitis B
- your immune system is not working well (e.g., you are on dialysis or you have AIDS)
- you have a job that exposes you to human blood

Should you ever get a booster shot after the vaccine series?

Most people do not need booster shots after getting the vaccine series.

After vaccination, babies born to infected mothers should get their blood tested at 9 to 15 months of age to be sure that they are protected.

