

HEPATITIS B (HBV)

What is hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B (HBV) is a virus that attacks the liver. It can lead to liver inflammation (swelling), development of scars in the liver (fibrosis and cirrhosis), and liver cancer.

How is HBV spread?

HBV is spread when body fluids (semen, vaginal secretions, blood) of someone infected with HBV enter the body of another person.

Symptoms of HBV

Most adults will develop symptoms of HBV if they get infected with it, but young children may not. Symptoms can include fever, feeling tired, loss of appetite, feeling queasy, vomiting, and/or jaundice (yellowed skin and eyes).

Risks for getting HBV

People at higher risk for HBV include the following:

- Infants born to mothers with HBV
- People born in the USA who are not vaccinated for HBV
- People with other infections such as hepatitis C or HIV
- People who share needles or equipment for drug use
- Sex partners of people with HBV, including men who have sex with men
- ...and others (for a full list, please visit our website)

How is HBV diagnosed?

HBV is diagnosed through a blood test called Hepatitis B Panel. The results of this test will show whether you are currently infected.

Screening for HBV

People with any risks for HBV should speak to their doctor about being tested. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends screening all adults 18 and older for hepatitis B at least once.

Vaccination for HBV

There is a vaccine that is highly effective in preventing HBV infection. It can be given to children and adults.

Treatment of HBV

Not everyone with HBV infection needs to be treated. Speak to your doctor if you are diagnosed with HBV. If treatment is recommended, it can include antiviral medication and immune modulator drugs (medicine to boost your immune system).

To learn more about hepatitis B, scan the QR code below. For a complete list of all of our free resources, please visit: liverfoundation.org/resource-center.

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For questions about liver wellness and disease, or for emotional support to patients at the point of crisis and information on local resources including physician referrals, please contact our Helpline at 1-800-465-4837.

