

# Hepatitis B

- Precaution to reduce the risk of HBV includes avoiding unprotected sex unless you're absolutely certain your partner isn't infected with HBV or any other sexually transmitted infection, and use condoms if uncertain. Remember that although condoms can reduce your risk of contracting HBV, they don't eliminate the risk.
- Don't use illegal drugs and don't share needles.
- Be cautious about body piercing and tattooing. Look for clean and authorized shops and ask about how the equipment is cleaned.
- If you're traveling to a region where hepatitis B is common, take the hepatitis B vaccine and avoid dental and surgical procedures in high-risk areas.

## Communicable Disease Center recommends the hepatitis B vaccine for:

- Newborns, children and adolescents not vaccinated at birth.
- Healthcare workers and other people who come into contact with blood.
- People who live with someone who has hepatitis B or has a sexually transmitted infection, including HIV.
- People who have multiple sexual partners.
- Sexual partners of someone who has hepatitis B.
- People who inject illegal drugs or share needles and syringes.
- People with chronic liver disease or with end-stage kidney disease.
- Travelers planning to go to an area of the world with a high hepatitis B infection rate.



# Hepatitis B

## What is hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is a contagious viral infection caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV) that attacks the liver and can cause both acute and chronic disease. It is a major global health problem. It can cause chronic infection and puts people at high risk of death from cirrhosis and liver cancer. In 2015, hepatitis B resulted in an estimated 887,000 deaths, mostly from cirrhosis and hepatocellular carcinoma.

## How is hepatitis B spread?

The virus is passed from person to person through blood, saliva, semen or vaginal secretions during unprotected sexual contact with someone who is infected or through sharing of contaminated needles and syringes. It does not spread by sneezing or coughing.

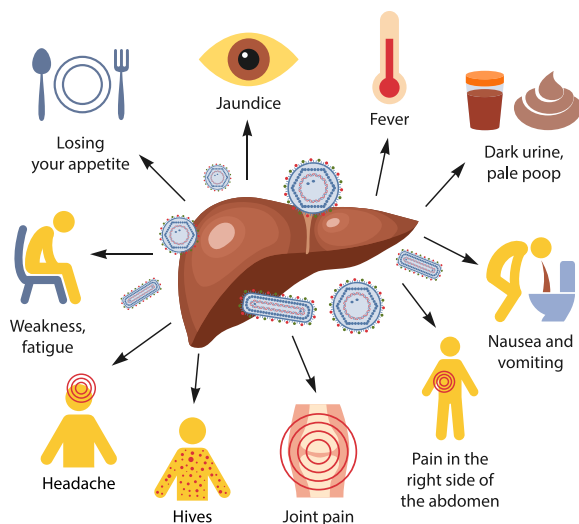
Also accidental needle sticks injuries are considered a possible mode of infection for health care workers. The virus is most commonly transmitted from mother to child during birth and delivery. However, the newborn can be vaccinated to avoid getting infected in almost all cases.

## Symptoms

Symptoms of hepatitis B range from mild to severe. They usually appear about one to four months after you've been infected and may include:

- Abdominal pain
- Dark urine
- Fever
- Joint pain
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea and vomiting
- Weakness and fatigue
- Yellowing of your skin and the whites of your eyes (jaundice)

## SYMPTOMS OF HEPATITIS B



## Diagnosis

Your doctor will examine you and look for signs of liver damage and send a blood test to diagnose hepatitis B and determine whether it's acute or chronic and determine your immunity to Hepatitis B. Additionally, a liver ultrasound will be done which helps to assess for any liver cirrhosis.

## Treatment

- Acute illness is treated symptomatically with close observation for early signs of liver failure.
- Chronic infection may require treatment with antiviral medication to reduce the long-term risk of cirrhosis or hepatocellular carcinoma.

## Prevention

- Hepatitis B can be prevented by vaccines that are safe, available and effective. The hepatitis B vaccine is typically given as three or four injections over six months. You can't get hepatitis B from the vaccine.