

Hepatitis B and Travel



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مركز الأمراض الإنتقالية
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Introduction

Hepatitis B is a viral infection caused by the Hepatitis B virus. This is transmitted by:

- contaminated blood
- sexual contact
- blood transfusion
- contaminated surgical instruments/ needle sharing
- from a mother to her fetus

Hepatitis B is a public health problem worldwide. Areas where there is a higher risk of exposure to Hepatitis B include Africa, India, China, South and Central America and Southeast Asia.

The Illness

Symptoms include:

- mild fever
- gastrointestinal upset
- nausea/vomiting
- diarrhea
- abdominal pain
- yellowish discoloration of the eyes and skin (Jaundice).

The illness lasts for about six months but can persist longer in some individuals who become carriers

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.

Recommendations for travelers

Travelers at risk should consider vaccination.

Individuals should avoid risky behavior e.g. unprotected sex, tattoos, piercings, visiting traditional barbers in high risk destinations.

Avoid dental and surgical procedures in high-risk areas.

Vaccination

It is given in the following ways:

- First dose: first day
- Second dose: One month after the first dose
- Third dose: Six months after the first dose

The Hepatitis B vaccine is available in the Communicable Disease Center Travel Clinic.