

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a serious liver infection caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV). For some people, hepatitis B infection becomes chronic, meaning it lasts more than six months. Having chronic hepatitis B increases your risk of developing cirrhosis — a condition that causes permanent scarring of the liver, liver failure or liver cancer.

Most adults infected with hepatitis B recover fully, even if their signs and symptoms are severe.

Infants and children are more likely to develop a chronic hepatitis B infection.

A vaccine can prevent hepatitis B.

Taking certain precautions can help to prevent spreading of HBV to others

Signs and symptoms of hepatitis B, ranging from mild to severe, usually appear about 1-3 months after you've been infected. Signs and symptoms of hepatitis B 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)

Hepatitis B infection is caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV). The virus is passed from person to person through blood, semen or other body fluids.

Common ways HBV is transmitted include:

Sexual contact. You may become infected if you have unprotected sex with an infected partner whose blood, saliva, semen or vaginal secretions enter your body.

Sharing of needles. HBV is easily transmitted through needles and syringes contaminated with infected blood. Sharing intravenous (IV) drug paraphernalia puts you at high risk of hepatitis B.

Accidental needle sticks. Hepatitis B is a concern for health care workers and anyone else who comes in contact with human blood.

Mother to child. Pregnant women infected with HBV can pass the virus to their babies during childbirth. However, the newborn can be vaccinated to avoid getting infected in almost all cases. Talk to your doctor about being tested for hepatitis B if you are pregnant or want to become pregnant

Acute vs. chronic hepatitis B

Hepatitis B infection may be either short-lived (acute) or long lasting (chronic).

Acute hepatitis B infection lasts less than six months. Your immune system can clear acute hepatitis B from your body, and you should recover completely within a few months. Most people who acquire hepatitis B as adults have an acute infection, but it can lead to chronic infection.

Chronic hepatitis B infection lasts six months or longer. When your immune system can't fight off the acute infection, hepatitis B infection may last a lifetime and if not treated may lead to serious illnesses such as cirrhosis and liver cancer.

The younger you are when you get hepatitis B — particularly newborns or children younger than 5 — the higher your risk the infection becoming chronic. Chronic infection may go undetected for decades until a person becomes seriously ill from liver disease or is discovered incidentally.

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Viral hepatitis can be easily diagnosed using blood tests.

Blood tests can determine if you have the virus in your system and whether it's acute or chronic.

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You can take steps to reduce the risk of passing hepatitis B to others.

- Vaccinate your family or close contacts

- Have protected sex.
- Don't share razors or toothbrushes.
- Don't donate blood, body organs or semen.
- Stop drinking alcohol
- Avoid medications that may cause liver damage. Stop Self medication

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- If you have hepatitis, you usually don't need a special diet.

General dietary advice

- Eat regular & balanced meals.
- Maintain healthy calorie intake.
- Eat whole-grain cereals, breads, and grains.
- Eat lots of fruits and vegetables.
- Get adequate protein.
- Avoid fatty, salty, and sugary foods
- Drink enough fluids

Cautions:

- Avoid alcohol
- Be careful with dietary supplements