

HEPATITIS B VACCINATION

WHAT IS HEPATITIS B?

Hepatitis B, or HepB, is a viral liver infection that is spread through blood and body fluids. The virus can survive for up to 7 days on surfaces and objects.

Some ways people can get infected with HepB include:

- At **birth**, if the pregnant person has HepB
- **Sharing items**, like razors or toothbrushes, with an infected person
- **Contact with blood, open sores, or saliva** with traces of blood from an infected person
- **Sex** with an infected person
- **Exposure to blood** on needlesticks or sharp objects



WHAT IS ACUTE HEPB?

Acute HepB is a **short-term infection, lasting less than 6 months**. Some featured symptoms include **jaundice**, which is **yellowing of the skin and eyes due to liver damage** from the virus, diarrhea or vomiting, muscle and joint pain, stomach pain, loss of appetite, dark urine or clay-colored stool, and fatigue. In some cases, **acute HepB can be asymptomatic, meaning there are no symptoms**.

WHAT IS CHRONIC HEPB?

Chronic HepB is **an infection lasting more than 6 months**, and it can lead to liver disease, liver cancer, and death if left untreated.

However, with medical management, **it is still possible to live a long life with HepB**.

WOULD I KNOW I HAVE HEPATITIS B?

People who have HepB **do not always know they have the infection** because it is possible to be asymptomatic (no symptoms). **About half of people with HepB don't realize they have it!** These individuals can **unknowingly spread the virus to others**. Even when the infection does not have symptoms, it still causes damage to the liver and can lead to serious complications later.

Because HepB can be spread without anyone knowing they are infected, **vaccination is the most effective way to protect yourself and your family**. Making sure your baby receives the recommended HepB vaccine at birth and completes the full vaccine series provides long-lasting protection against a preventable infection.

ANYONE CAN GET HEPATITIS B BUT SOME PEOPLE ARE AT HIGHER RISK INCLUDING:

- Infants born to people with hepatitis B
- People born in certain countries where hepatitis B is common
- People born in the US who were not vaccinated as infants and whose parents were born in countries with high rates of hepatitis B
- People who have hepatitis C
- People who have sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)
- People who are on dialysis
- People who have liver damage or inflammation
- People who have been in jail or prison
- People who inject drugs (PWID) or share needles, syringes, or other types of drug equipment
- Sex partners of people who have hepatitis B.
- Men who have sex with men
- People who live with someone who has hepatitis B
- Health care and public safety workers who are exposed to blood on the job

HEPATITIS B VACCINE

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is the largest professional association of pediatricians, dedicated to the health of all children. It continues to **recommend giving newborns a dose of hepatitis B vaccine within 24 hours of birth** with additional doses at 1-2 months and 6-18 months.

Most infants who get infected with the virus will develop a chronic infection. Giving newborns the Hepatitis B vaccine **protects them from acute and chronic illness**. The vaccine is given as a series of 3 doses for infants with the first dose being within the first 24 hours of life. The second dose is given at 1-2 months of age, and the third is given between 6-18 months of age.

After vaccination, some babies may experience redness, tenderness, and swelling at the injection site. Some may also have a fever.

Newborn vaccination ensures further protection and acts as a safety net to protect babies from acquiring the disease.

Hepatitis B is tested for during pregnancy. Vaccination is also **available for pregnant people and is safe to get during pregnancy**. It is important to note that it is possible to get a false negative with testing. Newborn vaccination ensures further protection and acts as a safety net to protect babies from acquiring the disease.

SOURCE:

American Academy of Pediatrics: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/Hepatitis-B-Vaccine-What-You-Need-to-Know.aspx>