



## Hepatitis B Fast Facts

### Everything you need to know in 2 minutes or less!



Hepatitis B is the most common serious liver infection in the world. It is caused by the **hepatitis B virus (HBV)** that attacks liver cells and can lead to liver failure, cirrhosis (scarring) or cancer of the liver. The virus is transmitted through contact with blood and bodily fluids that contain blood.

Most people are able to fight off an HBV infection and clear the virus from their blood. However, 5-10% of adults, 30-50% of children, and 90% of babies will not get rid of the virus and will develop chronic infection. Chronically infected people can pass the virus on to others and are at increased risk for liver problems later in life.

HBV is 100 times more infectious than the AIDS virus. Yet, hepatitis B can be prevented with a safe and effective vaccine. For the 400 million people worldwide who are chronically infected with HBV, the vaccine is of no use. However, there are promising new treatments for those who live with chronic HBV.

#### In the World:



- This year alone, 10 to 30 million people will become infected with the hepatitis B virus (HBV).
- The World Health Organization estimates that 400 million people worldwide are already chronically infected with hepatitis B.
- HBV infection leads to over 1 million deaths each year.

#### In the US:



- This year alone, 100,000 new people will become infected with HBV.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that 1.25 million Americans are already chronically infected with hepatitis B.
- Between 5000 and 6000 Americans die of hepatitis B-related liver complications each year.

#### How is HBV Transmitted?

HBV is most efficiently transmitted through blood and infected bodily fluids. This can occur through direct blood-to-blood contact, unprotected sex, illicit drug use, and from an infected woman to her newborn during the delivery process.

## HBV can be spread by

- unprotected sex
- sharing IV drug needles
- living in a household with an infected person
- an infected mother to her newborn child at birth
- sharing earrings, razors or toothbrushes with an infected person
- unsterilized needles, including tattoo or piercing needles
- human bites



## HBV is not spread by

- kissing on the cheek or lips
- coughing or sneezing
- casual contact such as hugging or holding hands
- eating food prepared by an infected individual



## People are most at risk for HBV if they

- are born to mothers who are infected with HBV
- live in close household contact with a chronically infected individual
- adopt a child from a country where HBV is prevalent
- have unprotected sex or have had more than one sexual partner in the last 6 months
- have ever been diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease (STD)
- men who have sex with men
- share needles and syringes
- are a health care provider or emergency responder who comes into contact with bodily fluids
- are a patient on kidney dialysis
- live or work in an institutional setting, such as a prison or group home

## Can HBV be prevented?



YES! Ask your doctor about the safe and effective vaccine and protect yourself and your loved ones for a lifetime. The CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend that all infants, children and adolescents up to age 18 receive the HBV vaccine. The vaccine is also recommended for all adults who may be at high risk for infection.

The cost for the vaccine varies in the US, but most insurance plans cover infants and children to 18 years of age. Some people can receive the vaccine free of charge from their local public health clinic. High-risk adults may also be covered by their health insurance or can receive the vaccine through an STD or family planning clinic.

Remember, it only takes three shots to provide a lifetime of protection!



## Additional HBV resources

Visit our website at [www.hepb.org](http://www.hepb.org)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) hepatitis branch at [www.cdc.gov/hepatitis](http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis)

American Liver Foundation at [www.liverfoundation.org](http://www.liverfoundation.org)

Immunization Action Coalition at [www.immunize.org](http://www.immunize.org)