

Hepatitis B



What is Hepatitis B?

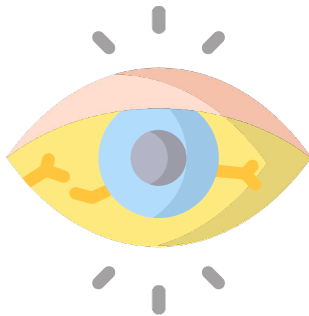
Hepatitis B (hep B) is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV). There are different types of hepatitis viruses. Hep B is one of the most common.

Most people have a short-term (acute) infection that lasts a few weeks and goes away by itself. **For others, it can become a long-term (chronic) infection.** Hep B infection can be deadly.

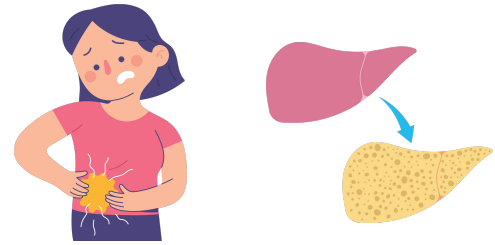
Signs & Symptoms

Infants and young children usually show no symptoms. All pregnant women and infants born to pregnant women with an HBV infection should get tested for Hep B. Symptoms of acute hep B can include:

- Fever,
- Feeling tired,
- Not feeling hungry,
- Nausea,
- Throwing up,
- Stomach pain,
- Dark-colored urine,
- Clay-colored feces (poop),
- Joint pain, or
- Yellow skin or eyes (jaundice).



A person can pass the virus to others if they are not showing symptoms. Hep B can live in a body for years before showing signs of infection. When this happens, it can become a chronic infection. Chronic hep B can lead to liver damage, liver cancer, and death.



Transmission

Hep B is spread when blood, semen, or other body fluids from a person infected with HBV enter the body of someone who is not infected. This includes through:

- Childbirth,
- Sharing personal items, like toothbrushes or razors,
- Sharing needles, syringes, or medical devices,
- Contact with blood or an open wound, and
- Unprotected sex.



Prevention

Vaccination is the best prevention. All babies are required to get three (3) doses of the hep B vaccine. One (1) dose at the following ages:

- Within 24 hours of birth
- 1-2 months
- 6-18 months

People have the option of getting a vaccine that protects against hep B alone, or one that protects against hep B and other infections. For more information on combination vaccines, including those that have hep B vaccines, visit [Combination Vaccines](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz/downloads/combination-vaccines.html) (cdc.gov).