



HEPATITIS B FACT SHEET

Prevent Hepatitis B by getting vaccinated!

Get more information on viral hepatitis by accessing
<http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis>

Or write:

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
Division of Viral Hepatitis, Mailstop G37
Atlanta, GA 30333

Is Hepatitis B a serious Problem?

Yes. Each year, thousands of people of all ages get hepatitis B and about 5,000 die of chronic liver problems caused by hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection. If you have had other types of hepatitis, such as hepatitis A or hepatitis C, you can still get hepatitis B. Hepatitis B is a serious disease caused by the hepatitis B virus that attacks the liver and can spread to others.

How is it spread?

HBV is spread by:

- ✓ Having sex with an infected person
- ✓ Direct contact with the blood of an infected person

How can you protect yourself from getting infected with HBV?

- ✓ Get vaccinated! Hepatitis B vaccine is safe, effective, and your best protection.
- ✓ Practice "safer" sex. If you are having sex, but not with one steady partner, use latex condoms correctly every time you have sex. The efficacy of latex condoms in preventing infection with HBV is unknown, but their proper use may reduce transmission.
- ✓ Don't share anything that might have blood on it. Don't share drugs, needles, syringes, cookers, cotton, water or rinse cups. Don't share personal care items, such as razors or toothbrushes.
- ✓ Think about the health risks if you are planning to get a tattoo or body piercing. Make sure the artist or piercer sterilizes needles and equipment, uses disposable gloves, and washes hands properly.
- ✓ Handle needles and sharps safely. Follow standard precautions if you have a job that exposes you to human blood.

Who should get vaccinated? Get Hepatitis B vaccine if:

- ✓ You are under 19 years of age
 - ✓ Your sex partner has hepatitis B
 - ✓ You are a man who has sex with men*
 - ✓ You recently had a sexually transmitted disease (e.g., gonorrhea, syphilis)
 - ✓ You have sex with more than one partner
 - ✓ You shoot drugs*
 - ✓ You live with someone who has chronic hepatitis B
 - ✓ You have a job that exposes you to human blood
 - ✓ You are a kidney dialysis patient
 - ✓ You live or travel for more than 6 months in countries where hepatitis B is common
- *Also get hepatitis A vaccine

Is the vaccine safe?

Yes. Hepatitis B vaccine is safe and effective. Millions of children and adults have received the vaccine worldwide since 1982.

Should you get a blood test after the vaccine series to be sure that you are protected?

Most people don't need to get their blood tested after completing the vaccine series (usually three shots) and most people do not need booster shots.

You should get a blood test 1 to 2 months after you complete the series if:

- ✓ Your sex partner has chronic hepatitis B
- ✓ Your immune system is not working well (e.g., you are on dialysis or you have AIDS)
- ✓ You have a job that exposes you to human blood

How do you know if you have hepatitis B?

Only a blood test can tell for sure. See your doctor if you have symptoms of hepatitis (e.g. extreme tiredness, loss of appetite, joint pain, yellow skin or eyes), or if you think you had direct contact with someone who has hepatitis B.