



Hepatitis B

What is hepatitis B?

The hepatitis B virus (HBV) causes inflammation of the liver, which over time causes scarring of the liver tissue and may lead to acute liver failure, cirrhosis and liver cancer. Infection with the hepatitis B virus may be acute (self-resolved and lasting less than 6 months) or chronic (lifelong). HBV is transmitted by contact with contaminated blood, semen, and vaginal fluid, and can live outside the body in these fluids. The contaminated fluid has to enter the body of a non-infected person through a break in the skin, such as a cut or tear, or via a mucous membrane in order for a new infection to occur.

How is hepatitis B transmitted?

Hepatitis B is transmitted when infectious blood and sexual fluids enter the bloodstream through a break in the skin or via a mucus membrane. Having unprotected sex is one of the most common risk factors, with the risk of sexual transmission increasing with multiple sex partners. Sharing needles, straws, and drug paraphernalia while injecting drugs, traveling to an endemic country where the HBV prevalence is high, and receiving body art in an unsafe setting are additional risk factors. Children born to hepatitis B-positive mothers can become infected during labor if preventative steps aren't taken. Healthcare workers exposed to accidental needle sticks, and long-term hemodialysis patients may be at risk. Sharing personal items that come into contact with blood (toothbrushes, nail clippers, etc.) can also transmit the virus.

What are the symptoms?

Less than 40% of individuals report flu-like symptoms in their first month of being infected. Symptoms may not appear until the virus has progressed to an advanced stage, and might include jaundice (yellowing of the eyes, skin and/or fingernails), clay color bowel movements and dark-colored urine, abdominal pain, and fatigue.

What are treatment options for hepatitis B-infected individuals?

While there is no cure for hepatitis B, current treatments can lower viral load and minimize damage to the liver. Consulting with a specialist to explore your options based on lifestyle, commitment, and other factors are recommended before getting treatment.

What are the statistics?

<i>As of 2014 -</i>	Colorado	U.S.	Worldwide
Acute HBV Cases	30	19,764	> 1 billion



Chronic HBV Cases	546	700,000 – 1.4 million	240 million
HBV-related Deaths	24	1,873	1 million

What are ways to protect against HBV?

The easiest and most effective way to protect from HBV infected is to get vaccinated! The 3-part HBV vaccine series provides 100% immunity. Additional prevention methods include using barrier methods during sexual activity (i.e. condoms, dental dams); not sharing needles, straws, and other drug-use equipment; not sharing personal items that may come into contact with blood or sexual fluids; getting tested and knowing your status and your partner's HBV status, and receiving HBIG (hepatitis B immunoglobulin) within 24 hours of an HBV exposure

Where can I get tested for hepatitis B?

If you believe you have been exposed to HBV, consulting with a primary care physician to run a 3-part HBV panel is recommended.

Where can I get more Information?

Liver Health Connection: 1-800-522-4372 or visit the website at www.liverhealthconnection.org.

Liver Health Connection provides information, support, and resources for people with hepatitis B and other liver diseases.

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Viral Hepatitis Program

(303) 692-2780 or www.HepatitisColorado.info

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/hepatitis

HCV Advocate

<http://hcvadvocate.org/hbv/>

Hep B Foundation

<http://www.hepb.org/>

Asian Liver Center

<http://liver.stanford.edu/>

NTC for Integrated Hepatitis Prevention Services

<http://knowhepatitis.org/>