

## What you should know about hepatitis B virus (HBV)

Hepatitis B is the most common serious liver infection in the world. It is caused by the hepatitis B virus that attacks and injures the liver. The aim of this resource guide is to provide you with useful information about hepatitis B and to give you the tools to have informed discussions with your health care provider about your condition, treatment plan, and ways you can promote a healthy lifestyle that improves your health outcomes.

More information regarding hepatitis B can be found in our **HBV Patient Education Hub ([www.cmeoutfitters.com/hbvpatiented](http://www.cmeoutfitters.com/hbvpatiented))**. There you will find resources such as videos, whiteboard animations, information about your disease, frequently asked questions, questions to ask your health care provider, and more that pertain specifically to your health concerns.

### How is HBV transmitted?

HBV is transmitted by:

- Birth (spread from an infected mother to her baby during birth)
- Sex with an infected partner
- Sharing needles, syringes, or drug preparation equipment
- Sharing items such as toothbrushes, razors, or medical equipment (such as a glucose monitor) with an infected person
- Direct contact with the blood or open sores of an infected person
- Exposure to an infected person's blood through needlesticks or other sharp instruments

### Who should be screened for HBV?

- People born in certain countries where hepatitis B is common (e.g., Nigeria, Yemen, Sudan, Papua New Guinea, Mongolia) - [https://www.cdc.gov/travel-static/yellowbook/2020/map\\_4-04.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/travel-static/yellowbook/2020/map_4-04.pdf)
- People born in the United States not vaccinated as infants whose parents were born in countries with high rates of hepatitis B
- Men who have sex with men
- People who inject drugs
- People with HIV
- Household and sexual contacts of people with hepatitis B
- People requiring immunosuppressive therapy
- People with end-stage renal disease (including hemodialysis patients)
- People with hepatitis C
- Pregnant women
- Infants born to HBV-infected mothers

### Preventing infection of close contacts

- Discuss the infection with any sexual partners and use a latex condom with every sexual encounter
- Do not share razors, toothbrushes, or anything that might have blood on it
- Cover open sores and cuts with a bandage
- Do not donate blood, body organs, other tissues, or sperm
- Immediate family, household members, and regular sexual partners should be tested for hepatitis B; anyone who is at risk of hepatitis B infection should be vaccinated
- Do not share any injection drug equipment (cookers, needles, syringes)
- Clean blood spills with a mixture of 1 part household bleach to 9 parts water
- Infection is NOT spread through hugging, kissing, or sharing food

# HBV Patient Guide (cont.)



## Treatment of HBV

While there's no cure for hepatitis B, treatment can help manage the condition. Most patients will need long-term treatment to maintain control of the HBV. Treatment options include:

- Immune modulator drugs - These drugs boost the immune system to help get rid of the hepatitis B virus. They are given as a shot over 6 months to 1 year. An example is pegylated interferon and alpha-interferon.
- Antiviral drugs - These are drugs that stop or slow down the hepatitis B virus from reproducing, which reduces the inflammation and damage of your liver. These are taken as a pill once a day for at least 1 year and usually longer. Examples include tenofovir disoproxil, tenofovir alafenamide, entecavir, telbivudine, adefovir dipivoxil, and lamivudine.

## Tips for maintaining liver health

### *Vaccinations*

- Everyone with chronic hepatitis B should be vaccinated against hepatitis A unless they are known to be immune. Influenza vaccination is recommended once per year, usually in the fall. Patients with liver disease should also receive standard immunizations, including a diphtheria and tetanus booster, every 10 years.

### *Liver screening*

- Regular screening for liver cancer is also recommended, particularly for older individuals, those with cirrhosis, and patients with a family history of liver cancer. In general, this includes an ultrasound examination of the liver every 6 months.

### *Diet*

- Eat a normal healthy and balanced diet and maintain a normal weight.

### *Alcohol*

- Alcohol should be avoided because it can worsen liver damage.

### *Exercise*

- Regular, mild-to-moderate exercise can boost energy and mood as well as immune function, which can reduce stress levels and help protect the liver.

### *Prescription and nonprescription medication*

- Many medications are broken down by the liver. Thus, it is always best to check with a health care provider or pharmacist before starting a new medication. As a general rule, unless the liver is already scarred, most drugs are safe for people with hepatitis B.

### *Support*

- Sharing concerns with others infected with hepatitis B can provide support. A number of organizations are available around the world.

## Useful Links

**HBV Patient Education Hub** – [www.cmeoutfitters.com/hbvpatiented](http://www.cmeoutfitters.com/hbvpatiented)

**Center for Disease Control and Prevention** – <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hbv/index.htm>

**Hepatitis B Foundation** – <https://www.hepb.org/>

**American Liver Foundation** – <https://liverfoundation.org/>

**Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination** – <https://www.globalhep.org/>