

## What is Hepatitis?

- "Hepatitis" means inflammation of the liver.
- The liver is a vital organ that processes nutrients, filters the blood, and fights infections.
- When the liver is inflamed or damaged, its function can be affected. Heavy alcohol use, toxins, some medications, and certain medical conditions can cause hepatitis. However, hepatitis is most often caused by a virus.
- In the United States, the most common types of viral hepatitis are Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C.

## What is Hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B can be a serious liver disease that results from infection with the Hepatitis B virus.

**Acute Hepatitis B** refers to a short-term infection that occurs within the first 6 months after someone is infected with the virus. The infection can range in severity from a mild illness with few or no symptoms to a serious condition requiring hospitalization. Some people, especially adults, are able to clear, or get rid of, the virus without treatment. People who clear the virus become immune and cannot get infected with the Hepatitis B virus again.

**Chronic Hepatitis B** refers to a lifelong infection with the Hepatitis B virus. The likelihood that a person develops a chronic infection depends on the age at which someone becomes infected. Up to 90% of infants infected with the Hepatitis B virus will develop a chronic infection. In contrast, about 5% of adults will develop chronic Hepatitis B. Over time, chronic Hepatitis B can cause serious health problems, including liver damage, cirrhosis, liver cancer, and even death.

## What are symptoms of Hepatitis C?

Many people with Hepatitis C do not have symptoms and do not know they are infected. If symptoms occur, they can include: fever, feeling tired, not wanting to eat, upset stomach, throwing up, dark urine, grey-colored stool, joint pain, and yellow skin and eyes

## When do symptoms of Hepatitis C occur?

If symptoms occur with **acute infection**, they can appear anytime from 2 weeks to 6 months after infection. If symptoms occur with **chronic Hepatitis C**, they can take decades to develop. When symptoms appear with chronic Hepatitis C, they often are a sign of advanced liver disease.

## Treatment and Prevention of Viral Hepatitis B and C

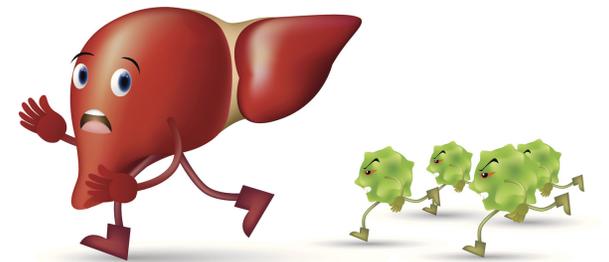
There is no cure for Hepatitis B but Hepatitis B infection can be prevented by vaccination. Hepatitis C infection can be cured but currently there is no vaccine to prevent Hepatitis C.

## For more information

- Talk to your healthcare professional
- Visit [www.cdc.gov/hepatitis](http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis)

## Contact

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# Viral Hepatitis B and C

## General Information

The Information provided is a courtesy of CDC.

## How is Hepatitis B spread?

The Hepatitis B virus is spread when blood, semen, or other body fluids from an infected person enters the body of someone who is not infected. The virus can be spread through:

- Sex with an infected person.
- Injection drug use.
- Outbreaks.
- Birth



Hepatitis B is not spread through breastfeeding, sharing eating utensils, hugging, kissing, holding hands, coughing, or sneezing. Unlike some forms of hepatitis, Hepatitis B is also not spread by contaminated food or water.

## What are the symptoms of Hepatitis B?

- Many people with Hepatitis B do not have symptoms and do not know they are infected.
- If symptoms occur, they can include: fever, feeling tired, not wanting to eat, upset stomach, throwing up, dark urine, grey-colored stool, joint pain, and yellow skin and eyes.

## When do symptoms occur?

- If symptoms occur with an acute infection, they usually appear within 3 months of exposure and can last up to 6 months.
- If symptoms occur with chronic Hepatitis B, they can take years to develop and can be a sign of advanced liver disease.

## Do you have Hepatitis B?

The only way to know if you have Hepatitis B is to **get tested**. Blood tests can determine if a person has been infected and cleared the virus, is currently infected, or has never been infected.

## What is Hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C is an infection of the liver that results from the Hepatitis C virus.

**Acute Hepatitis C** refers to the first several months after someone is infected. Acute infection can range in severity from a very mild illness with few or no symptoms to a serious condition requiring hospitalization. For reasons that are not known, about 20% of people are able to clear, or get rid of, the virus without treatment in the first 6 months.

Unfortunately, most people who get infected are not able to clear the Hepatitis C virus and develop a chronic, or lifelong, infection. Over time, **chronic Hepatitis C** can cause serious health problems including liver disease, liver failure, and even liver cancer.

## How is Hepatitis C spread ?

Hepatitis C is usually spread when blood from a person infected with the Hepatitis C virus enters the body of someone who is not infected.



- Injection drug use (currently the most common means of HCV transmission in the U.S.)
- Receipt of donated blood, blood products, and organs (once a common means of transmission but now rare in the U.S. since blood screening became available in 1992)
- Needlestick injuries in health care settings
- Birth to an HCV-infected mother
- Other health care procedures that involve invasive procedures, such as injections
- Sharing personal items contaminated with infectious blood, such as razors or toothbrushes (also inefficient vectors of transmission)
- Sex with an HCV-infected person (an inefficient means of transmission)

## Who should be tested?

**Testing for Hepatitis B is recommended for:**

- All pregnant women
- Household and sexual contacts of people with Hepatitis B
- People born in certain parts of the world that have increased rates of Hepatitis B.
- People with certain medical condition: HIV infection, people who receive chemotherapy and people on hemodialysis
- People who inject drugs
- Men who have sex with men

**Testing for Hepatitis C is recommended for people:**

- Were born from 1945 – 1965
- Received donated blood or organs before 1992
- Have ever injected drugs, even if it was just once or many years ago
- Have certain medical conditions, such as chronic liver disease and HIV or AIDS
- Have abnormal liver tests or liver disease
- Have been exposed to blood from a person who has Hepatitis C
- Are on hemodialysis
- Are born to a mother with Hepatitis C

## Do you have Hepatitis C?

The only way to know if you have Hepatitis C is to **get tested**. Doctors use a blood test, called a **Hepatitis C Antibody Test**, which looks for antibodies to the Hepatitis C virus. Antibodies are chemicals released into the bloodstream when someone gets infected. A positive antibody test means that a person has been infected with the Hepatitis C virus at some point in time. However, a positive antibody test does not necessarily mean a person still has Hepatitis C. An additional test called a **RNA test** is needed to determine if a person is currently infected with Hepatitis C.