

Hepatitis B



What is Hepatitis?

Hepatitis is the inflammation of the liver. An inflamed liver cannot perform essential functions such as processing nutrients, filtering blood, and fighting infections.

What is Hepatitis B?

Acute Hepatitis B

- Short-term infection that shows symptoms within 6 months of virus present. Infections range from a mild illness with few symptoms to severe illness and hospitalization.
- Adults may be able to get rid of the virus without treatment. This results in immunity from Hepatitis B and cannot be infected again.

Chronic Hepatitis B

- A lifelong infection of the virus
- Younger children who are positive are more likely to develop chronic Hepatitis B
- 90% of infants infected with Hepatitis B will develop a chronic infection compared to only 5% of adults who may develop the chronic condition
- Chronic Hepatitis B can cause liver damage, cirrhosis, and liver cancer

How is it spread?

Infection spreads by contact of bodily fluids, such as blood, from an infected person to an uninfected person. This can include an exposure during birth. The virus can be infectious for up to 7 days on objects that may contain bodily fluids, such as washcloths, toothbrushes, or razors. It is not spread by air, food, or water.

Who should be vaccinated and why?

- Infants should receive a 3-dose series with the first being administered shortly after birth to prevent long-term chronic Hepatitis B.
- Babies can be infected during birth by the mother or from an infected individual.
- Most individuals that were infected as infants do not exhibit symptoms or realize they are infected and can unknowingly infect others including their peers.
- Once Hepatitis B is contracted, there is no cure.

Hepatitis B vaccines can **PREVENT** the spread of Hepatitis B and long-term illness