



PHILLY HEPATITIS

ANSWERS ABOUT HEPATITIS

B

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The information presented in this booklet is only intended to educate, and does not replace medical consultation. The Philadelphia Department of Public Health neither endorses nor opposes any treatment option presented within, and encourages you to discuss all treatment options with your healthcare provider. The resources noted are not the most comprehensive listing, but rather a sample of available options.

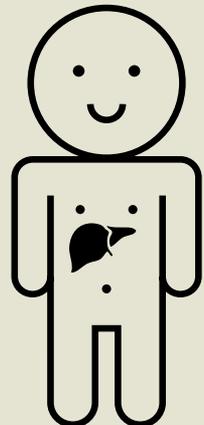
WHAT IS HEPATITIS B?

HEPATITIS B

Hepatitis B (also known as hep B) is a virus that infects the liver. It is the most common serious liver infection in the world. **Hepatitis B affects as many as 20,000 Philadelphians**, enough to fill our basketball stadium! The virus is spread when hep B infected blood, semen, and vaginal fluids enters the body through contact with an uninfected person's body fluids. Hep B is more easily spread than HIV, see page 12 for prevention tips!

HEPATITIS B AND YOUR LIVER

The liver has many important jobs that your body relies on to stay alive. Your liver cleans your blood, helps digest food, and helps the body store and use energy. Needless to say, your life depends on your liver! If you test positive for hep B, it is important to get treatment to keep the virus from causing scarring and other damage that can make your liver stop working. If you do not have hepatitis B you can protect yourself by getting vaccinated against the virus.



HEPATITIS B HAS TWO PHASES

There are two phases of a hep B infection. Your body reacts to each phase in different ways.

1.

Acute

Acute hepatitis B is the initial infection that occurs within 6 months after transmission. 90 out of 100 of adults who become infected fully recover and be protected or immune from the hep B. Once you recover from an acute infection, you cannot get hep B again.

2.

Chronic

Anyone who tests hep B positive 6 months after being exposed has a chronic infection. 10 out 100 adults exposed to hep B will develop a long-term infection while 90 out of 100 babies exposed (usually from mother to child transmission) can develop chronic hep B (in the US, infection can be prevented if the mother has pre-natal care). There is no cure but there are treatments that can control chronic hep B.

**HOW DO
PEOPLE GET
INFECTED
WITH
HEPATITIS B?**

BODY FLUIDS

Hepatitis B is spread when hep B infected blood, semen, and vaginal fluids enters the body through contact with an uninfected person's body fluids. Hep B is **NOT** spread by sneezing, coughing, kissing, hugging, or sharing utensils, food, or water. You cannot spread it by casual contact, such as shaking hands or talking.

People should be tested for hepatitis B if they:

- Were born to a mother who has hep B
- Had unprotected sex with multiple partners or someone who is hep B positive
- Shared needles, syringes, or other items used to inject drugs
- Received a blood transfusion or an organ transplant before 1992
- Received a tattoo or body piercing in an unlicensed setting like a house party or in jail
- Might have had contact with hep B infected blood as a healthcare worker
- Shared razors or toothbrushes with someone who may have hep B

IF YOU OR YOUR PARENTS WERE BORN OUTSIDE THE US

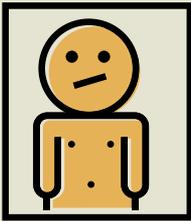
Countries in **Asia, the Pacific Islands, and sub-Saharan Africa** have very high rates of hep B. Unfortunately, some foreign countries do not screen all pregnant women for hep B. It is especially important that people who were born in countries with high rates of hepatitis B get tested to make sure that hep B was not passed on to them through childbirth.

HOW DOES HEPATITIS B AFFECT MY BODY?

ACUTE INFECTION

The acute stage of hep B happens right after a person is exposed to the virus. **Most people will have NO symptoms** to let them know they are sick.

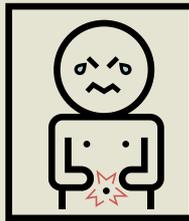
When people do have symptoms, they occur 2 weeks to 6 months after exposure (known as the “incubation period”) and are usually mild and flu-like. Symptoms can include:



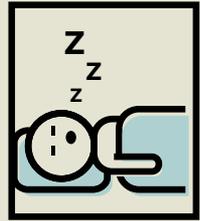
Yellowing of
Skin or Eyes
(Jaundice)



Fever



Abdominal
Pain



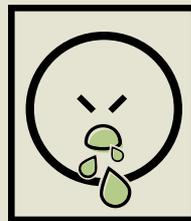
Always Tired



Dark Urine
(Pee)



Grey Feces
(Poop)



Nausea or
Vomiting

CHRONIC INFECTION

While most people with chronic hep B never show symptoms, the disease can have long-term effects. If left untreated hepatitis B can cause liver damage including cirrhosis (scarring of the liver), liver failure, and liver cancer. If you have a chronic infection you will probably not notice any obvious symptoms until your immune system is very weak or if your liver is starting to fail. **Do not** wait until you feel sick to get tested!

Hepatitis B is called a **silent killer** because if you wait for symptoms to show up, it may be too late to reverse the damage that has been done to your liver. Thankfully severe illness can be prevented.

If you think you may have been exposed to hepatitis B, find a doctor and get tested as soon as possible. If you test positive for hep B, **there are medications that can control the virus** and help keep your liver healthy.

DOES HEPATITIS B AFFECT PREGNANCY?

FROM MOTHER TO CHILD

Hepatitis B can be spread from mother to baby during pregnancy and childbirth. It is recommended that **all pregnant women** in the US be screened for hep B early in their pregnancy because steps can be taken to prevent the mom from passing hep B to her child. If a baby becomes infected with hep B, there is a very high risk that he or she will develop a chronic infection.

Need Assistance?

If you are pregnant and have had a positive hepatitis B test you can receive help from the Philadelphia Department of Public Health's Perinatal Hepatitis B Program. Call 215-685-6853 for more information on how to prevent your baby from getting hepatitis B.

HOW DO I GET TESTED FOR HEPATITIS B?

A BLOOD TEST

A blood test will tell you if you are infected with hep B. There are a few different blood tests for hep B and each one tells the doctor a different story about the virus like whether hep B ever entered your body, if it still lives in your body, and whether you have been vaccinated for hep B. These blood tests can be confusing! That's why it is important to discuss your test results with your doctor - make sure your doctor explains whether you have a new (acute) infection, chronic infection, or have recovered from an infection. Blood tests for hep B also show if you have already been immunized or not.

Need a Hepatitis B Test?

Talk to your doctor or visit www.phillyhepatitis.org for testing locations

HOW DO I GET TREATED FOR HEPATITIS B?

SEE A SPECIALIST

There is treatment for chronic hepatitis B. It does NOT cure the virus but it can keep it under control so hep B doesn't damage your liver. But, not everyone with chronic hep B needs to take medication -- discuss your options with a specialist who knows about hep B (such as a gastroenterologist, hepatologist, or infectious disease clinician). Ask your doctor about the cost of co-pays and side effects if they advise you to go on treatment. They can also help you access patient assistance programs to cover treatment costs if you are uninsured or cannot afford a co-pay.

HOW DO I GET TREATMENT IF I DON'T HAVE INSURANCE?

IF YOU ARE UNINSURED

To get tested or treated for hepatitis B, you will need to sign up for insurance or get health care coverage. Visit www.pahealthoptions.com or call 877-881-6388 to learn about the best choices for you.

To find out if you qualify for Medical Assistance (Medicaid) contact the PA Department of Human Services (DHS) at 866-550-4355 or visit www.compass.state.pa.us.

PHILADELPHIA HEALTH CENTERS

City Health Centers (listed on page 17) and community clinics (also called FQHCs) will treat uninsured people and have staff that can help you apply for insurance. For help finding a clinic call 3-1-1 or visit www.phillyhepatitis.org.

HOW DO I AVOID SPREADING HEPATITIS B TO OTHERS?

VACCINATIONS

There is a vaccine available for hepatitis B. If you have hep B, your close contacts should be tested for hep B and vaccinated if there is a possibility that they have come in contact with your bodily fluids through personal care items like razors; through sexual contact; or by sharing drug use equipment.

BE CAREFUL WITH BODILY FLUIDS

These simple steps can be taken to avoid spreading hepatitis B to others:

- Never share toothbrushes, razors, nail files, clippers, or other personal hygiene items that may come into contact with blood or bodily fluids
- Cover all cuts and open sores with clean bandages
- Use condoms with all sex partners until they are completely vaccinated
- Clean up any blood spills with bleach solution (one part household bleach to 10 parts water)
- Never donate blood, body organs, tissue, or sperm
- If you use drugs, do not share works

Use Clean Works

If you use drugs, Prevention Point Philadelphia offers clean syringes, works, and other supportive services at their drop-in center and several mobile sites. Visit them at 2913-15 Kensington Ave, call 215-634-5272 or visit www.ppponline.org to learn more.

**HOW DO I
STAY HEALTHY
WHILE LIVING
WITH
HEPATITIS B?**

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF!

There are many important things you can do to help yourself stay healthy while living with hepatitis B:

- Get vaccinated against hepatitis A! This is a separate infection that can also damage your liver. The vaccine is given as a series of 2 shots at least 6 months apart. The shots are safe and effective.
- Schedule regular check-ups with your hepatitis specialist. They will monitor your health, check to see if the disease is affecting your liver, and can help determine if and when you need to start treatment.
- Some medicines can speed up liver damage if you have hep B. Talk to your health care provider if you take over the counter and/or prescriptions drugs to see if they will affect your liver.
- Avoid alcohol. Since alcohol can cause hepatitis B to damage your liver at a faster rate, you should drink less alcohol, or not drink it at all.
- Exercise regularly and eat a healthy diet.
- Talk to someone - finding out you have hepatitis B can be overwhelming. You may feel sad, angry, scared, or confused. Talking about your feelings to people close to you can help. Let your doctor know if you need more support.

Feeling Depressed?

Immediate help is available if you are depressed, suicidal, or want help quitting drugs and/or alcohol. Call the Department of Behavioral Health's hotline, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 215-686-4420.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

PHILLY HEPATITIS

www.phillyhepatitis.org

Information and resources on testing, treatment, and support options within Philadelphia.

HEP B UNITED PHILADELPHIA

www.hepbunitedphiladelphia.org

A city-wide education campaign dedicated to increasing testing and vaccination in the fight against hepatitis B and liver cancer.

HEPATITIS B FOUNDATION

www.hepb.org or 215-489-4900

This Doylestown-based organization has a patient hotline as well as educational material and resources in a variety of languages.

HBV ADVOCATE

www.hbvadvocate.org

Up-to-date information and patient resources including treatment guides, fact sheets, newsletters and more.

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/B/index.htm

PHILADELPHIA

HEALTH CENTERS

HEALTH CENTER 1

500 S. Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19146
215-685-6570

(Sexual Health &
Family Planning Only)

HEALTH CENTER 2

Constitution Health Plaza
1930 S. Broad Street, Unit #14
Philadelphia, PA 19145
215-685-1803

HEALTH CENTER 3

555 S. 43rd Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104
215-685-7504

HEALTH CENTER 4

4400 Haverford Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19104
215-685-7601

HEALTH CENTER 5

1900 N. 20th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19121
215-685-2933

HEALTH CENTER 6

301 W. Girard Street
Philadelphia, PA 19123
215-685-3803

HEALTH CENTER 9

131 E. Cheltenham Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19144
215-685-5701

HEALTH CENTER 10

2230 Cottman Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19149
215-685-0639

STRAWBERRY MANSION HEALTH CENTER

2840 Dauphin Street
Philadelphia, PA 19132
215-685-2401



PHILLY HEPATITIS

For more information about hepatitis B
or for help finding testing and support services,
visit www.phillyhepatitis.org



Department of
Public Health
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