

HEPATITIS B

KNOW

HEPATITIS B™

What is Hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is a liver disease. It is caused by the Hepatitis B virus. For some people who get Hepatitis B, the virus stays in the body, causing a lifelong illness. Hepatitis B can cause serious health problems over time. These problems can include liver cancer and liver failure.

How is Hepatitis B spread?

Hepatitis B is spread when someone comes in contact with blood from a person who has the disease. Most people born in China and other Asian countries who have Hepatitis B were infected as infants or young children. Hepatitis B can be passed from an infected mother to her baby at birth or from a family member to young children.

Hepatitis B is not a genetic disease. People also do not get Hepatitis B from sharing meals, bowls or utensils with someone who has the disease. Hepatitis B is not spread through breastfeeding, hugging, kissing, holding hands, coughing, or sneezing.

How do people know if they have Hepatitis B?

A Hepatitis B test lets people know if they have it. This is a simple blood test that takes only a little bit of blood from a person's arm. Doctors do not always do this test, so it is important to ask to be tested.



Why should people be tested for Hepatitis B?

Getting tested lets a person know if he or she has Hepatitis B. There are treatments available for Hepatitis B that can help prevent serious liver damage. People who find out they have Hepatitis B can also keep other family members healthy. This is why women are always tested for Hepatitis B when they are pregnant. Family members who have never had Hepatitis B can get a vaccine to protect them from getting it.

Hepatitis B test results will be kept confidential. People with Hepatitis B cannot be forced to leave the United States. They also cannot be fired from a job, or forced to leave school.

How is Hepatitis B treated?

People who have hepatitis B should see a doctor who is very knowledgeable about the disease. The doctor can give medicines that will slow down liver damage. It is important to ask the doctor before taking any Eastern liver medicines because they might hurt the liver or cause problems with some of the medicines prescribed by the doctor.

How common is Hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is very common in China and other Asian countries. Approximately 1 in 12 Asians are living with Hepatitis B, but most people do not know it.

What are the symptoms of Hepatitis B?

Most people who have Hepatitis B do not know they have it. The disease does not always cause symptoms. Hepatitis B can stay hidden in the body. Many people can live with Hepatitis B for 20 years without feeling sick. Still, liver damage from the disease can take place during this time.

How serious is Hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B can become very serious. For some people, this disease leads to liver damage, like liver failure or cancer.

cdc.gov/knowhepatitisB

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