

How do I know if I've already been infected?

The only way to know if you've been infected is to have your blood tested.

Should I have a blood test before I start the hepatitis B vaccine series?

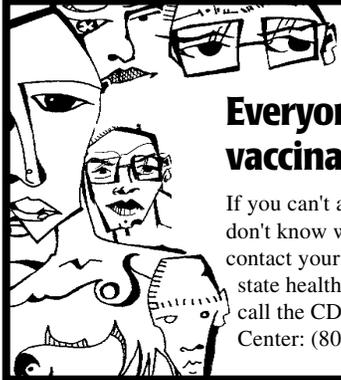
Talk to your health professional about whether you need this testing. Most people do not need a blood test. If you and your doctor decide you need testing, get your blood drawn, then start the vaccine series at the same visit. That way, you will be closer to being protected from HBV.

Will hepatitis B vaccine protect me from hepatitis A or hepatitis C?

No. Hepatitis A and hepatitis C are different diseases caused by different viruses. There is a vaccine for hepatitis A, but there is no vaccine for hepatitis C. For information on hepatitis A and hepatitis C, talk to your health professional, call your local health department, or visit CDC's hepatitis website at www.cdc.gov/hepatitis.

How can I pay for these shots?

If you have insurance, the cost of hepatitis B vaccination may be covered. If not, sometimes these shots are available free or at low cost through special clinics or health departments. Call your local health department for details. And, while you're at it, find out what other vaccinations you need, too!



Everyone needs vaccinations!

If you can't afford shots or don't know where to get them, contact your city, county, or state health department, or call the CDC-INFO Contact Center: (800) 232-4636.

**Every week
hundreds of
sexually active
people get
hepatitis B**



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www.immunize.org
www.vaccineinformation.org
www.hepprograms.org

The Immunization Action Coalition (IAC) encourages you to make and distribute copies of this brochure. If you alter it, please acknowledge that it was adapted from IAC. The technical content was reviewed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

**Get protected!
Get vaccinated!**

What is hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is a sexually transmitted disease. It is a liver infection caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV). HBV is spread much like HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. HBV is found in the blood, semen, and vaginal secretions of an infected person. HBV is easier to catch than HIV because it is 100 times more concentrated in an infected person's blood.

How serious is infection with HBV?

Infection with HBV can cause long-term (chronic) infection that can lead to liver scarring (cirrhosis) and liver cancer. More than 5,000 people in the United States die every year from hepatitis B-related liver disease. Fortunately, there is a vaccine to prevent this disease.

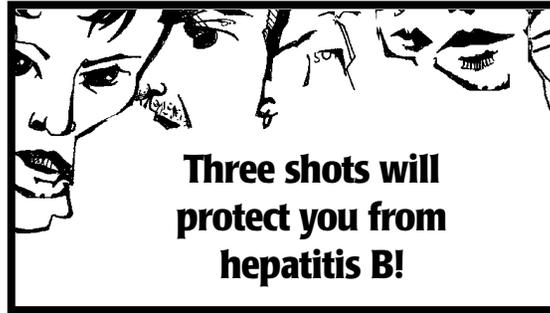
Am I at risk of getting HBV infection from sex?

If you answer "yes" to any of the following questions, you are at risk for HBV infection and need to be vaccinated!

Do you have more than one sex partner? yes no

During any six-month period, have you, or your partner, had sex with more than one person? yes no

Have you or your sex partner had a sexually transmitted disease? yes no



Is sex the only way I can get infected with HBV?

No. Hepatitis B is a sexually transmitted disease, but it is spread in other ways, too. HBV is a hardy virus that can exist on almost any surface for up to one month. You can get infected with HBV by

- unprotected vaginal or anal sex
- sharing needles or paraphernalia (works) for illegal drug use
- mother-to-infant transmission during birth
- contact with an infected person's blood or body fluids
- living in a household with a person with chronic (long-term) HBV infection
- tattooing or body piercing with unsterile equipment
- human bites
- sharing toothbrushes, razors, nail clippers, or washcloths

You do not get hepatitis B from sneezing, coughing, dry lip kissing, or holding hands.

How do I protect myself from getting infected?

Get vaccinated against hepatitis B! Three shots are usually given over a period of six months.

Tell your sex partner(s) to get vaccinated too, and always follow "safer sex" practices.

What are the symptoms of hepatitis B?

Only about half of the people who are infected with HBV get symptoms. Symptoms might include

- yellowing of skin and whites of eyes
- dark-colored urine
- loss of appetite or nausea
- bloated and tender belly
- extreme tiredness
- fever
- pain in joints

Do people fully recover?

Most people who get infected as adults will fully recover. However, 6 out of 100 people will remain infectious and carry HBV in their bodies for life. This is called chronic infection. Chronically infected people do not necessarily look or feel ill, but they are at increased risk for liver failure and liver cancer and need ongoing medical care. They can also spread the virus to others.

