

# **Health Care Education Hepatitis B**



## **Hidaya Foundation**

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*And when I am sick, then He heals me. - - - Al Quran – Ash-Shuraa, Verse 26:80*

### **Hepatitis B**

**What is Hepatitis B?** Hepatitis B is a liver disease caused by the Hepatitis B virus (HBV), which can cause lifelong infection, scarring of the liver, liver cancer, liver failure, and death.

**Why is the Liver so important?** The liver is the largest, heaviest and one of the most important internal organs. Dark red in color, it weighs 1-1.5 kg and is located behind the lower right part of your ribs. It stores vitamins, sugars, fats and other nutrients from the food you eat and then releases them to the body when needed. It also builds basic chemicals that your body needs to stay healthy. Last but not least, it removes waste products, harmful bacteria and toxic chemicals from your blood. In other words - it is the powerhouse, recycling, and disposal plant of the body. Life is not possible without the liver.

#### **What are the symptoms of Hepatitis B?**

Sometimes a person with HBV infection has no symptoms at all. The older you are, the more prone you are to have symptoms. You might be infected with HBV (and be spreading the virus) and not know it. In contrast, Hepatitis A virus causes inflammation of the liver, which leads to further complications and impairs proper functioning of the liver. This could lead to death if not treated.

Hepatitis B Symptoms include yellow skin or yellowing of the whites of your eyes (jaundice), tiredness, loss of appetite, nausea, abdominal discomfort, dark urine, clay-colored bowel movements, and joint pain.

If symptoms occur, they occur on the average of 12 weeks after exposure to Hepatitis B virus. Symptoms occur in about 70% of patients.

Symptoms are more likely to occur in adults than in children.

**Can Hepatitis B be prevented?** The best things a person can do to prevent the transmission of the virus is to practice safe and protective habits. Special caution should be maintained due to high risks of transmitting the virus sexually or by contaminated by blood.

Married couples, no matter what the duration of the relationship, should avoid sharing personal items, such as razors or toothbrushes, and infected women should abstain from sexual activity during menstruation. Either partner with infections that cause bleeding in the genital or urinary areas should avoid sexual activity until the infection is no longer active.

Infected patients should use condoms and contraceptives that prevent passage of the virus, possibly even in relationships that last for years.

**How does Hepatitis B spread?** HBV is spread when blood from an infected person enters the body of a person who is not infected. For example, HBV is spread by having sex with an infected person without using a condom (the effectiveness of latex condoms in preventing infection with HBV is unknown, but their proper use might reduce transmission), by sharing drugs, needles, through needle sticks or sharp exposures on the job, or from an infected mother to her baby during birth.

Hepatitis B is not spread through food or water, sharing eating utensils, breastfeeding, hugging, kissing, coughing, and sneezing or by casual contact.

## **Health Care Education**

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**How do you kill HBV?** HBV can survive outside the body at least 7 days and still be capable of causing infection. You should clean up any blood spills - including dried blood, which can still be infectious - using 1:10 dilution of one part household bleach to 10 parts of water for disinfecting the area. Use gloves when cleaning up any blood spills.

**Who should get tested for Hepatitis B?** If you can answer “YES” to any of these questions, please see your doctor immediately because you might be at risk for HBV.

**Please answer these questions honestly**

- |  |            |           |
|--|------------|-----------|
| Have you had a blood transfusion?  | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
| Currently, or in the past – have you:  |            |           |
| - had marital relations with someone infected with HBV?                                | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
| - had marital relations with more than one partner?                                    | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
| - shared I.V. needles for any reason?  | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
| - lived in the same house with someone who has chronic (long-term) HBV infection?      | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
| - been admitted in an institution for the developmentally disabled?                    | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
| - had hemophilia?  | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
| - traveled to areas where Hepatitis B is common?                                       | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
| - Had a body piercing (nose, ears, etc.)?  | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
| Does your work put you in contact with blood, blood products or needles?               | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
| Does any of your immediate family members have or has been diagnosed with Hepatitis B? | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |

**How do you know if you have Hepatitis B?** Only a blood test (Hepatitis B Surface Antigen: HBsAg) can determine whether or not you are infected with HBV. HBsAg will be detected in an infected person’s blood on the average of 4 weeks (range 1-9 weeks) after exposure to the virus. About 1 out of 2 patients will no longer be infectious by 7 weeks after onset of symptoms

and all patients, who do not remain chronically infected, will be HBsAg-negative by 15 weeks after onset of symptoms.

**Is there a cure for Hepatitis B?** There are no medications available for recently acquired (acute) HBV infection. Hepatitis B vaccine is available for the prevention of HBV infection. There are antiviral drugs available for the treatment of chronic HBV infection.

**If you are pregnant, should you worry about Hepatitis B?** Yes, you should get a blood test to check for HBV infection early during your pregnancy. If your HBsAg test is positive, this means you are infected with HBV and can give the virus to your baby. Babies who have HBV at birth may develop chronic HBV infection that can lead to cirrhosis of the liver or liver cancer. If your blood test is positive, your baby should receive the first dose of Hepatitis B vaccine, along with another shot, Hepatitis B immune globulin (called HBIG), at birth. The second dose of vaccine should be given at age of 1-2 months and the third dose at age of 6 months (but not before age of 24 weeks).

**Can I donate blood if I have HBV?** If you had HBV since age 11, you are not eligible to donate blood. In addition, if you ever tested positive for Hepatitis B at any age, you are not eligible to donate, even if you were never sick or jaundiced from the infection.

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Source: Department of Health and Human Services, January 2006 and information available freely on the Internet.

**Disclaimer:** All information provided in this flyer is posted for educational purposes only; it is not meant to be used as medical advice. For any advice, diagnosis, and treatment consult your personal physician.