

# Hepatitis B

## What is Hepatitis B and how is it spread?

Hepatitis means inflammation of the liver. Hepatitis B is an infection caused by a virus that attacks a person's liver and affects how it is able to function. The Hepatitis B virus is spread when blood, semen, or other body fluids from an infected person enters the body. Hepatitis B can be spread through unprotected sex with an infected person, sharing needles, syringes, or equipment to inject drugs, sharing personal care items such as razors or toothbrushes, or from birth from an infected mother to her child.

## How common is Hepatitis B?

In 2016, an estimated 1.1 million people in the United States were living with Hepatitis B.

## Who should get tested for Hepatitis B regularly?

Approximately 850,000 people in the United States are living with Hepatitis B. However, it is estimated that 67% of people do not know that they are infected with the virus so the true number is likely much higher. It also affects the ethnic group of Asians and Pacific Islanders more than other groups and it is estimated that 1 in 12 Asian/Pacific Islander individuals in the United States have Hepatitis B.

## Who should get tested?

- People born in countries with high Hepatitis B rates
- People who live with someone with Hepatitis B
- Men who have sex with men
- Persons who inject drugs
- HIV-positive persons
- Persons requiring immunosuppressive therapy
- Persons with end-stage renal disease (including hemodialysis patients)
- Blood and tissue donors
- Pregnant women
- Infants born to Hepatitis B infected mothers

## Signs and Symptoms

Many people do not know that they have Hepatitis B because they do not look or feel sick. However, there are some possible symptoms including:

- Fever
- Feeling tired
- Upset stomach
- Vomiting
- Dark urine
- Grey colored stool
- Joint pain
- Yellow skin and eyes

## Types of Hepatitis B Infection

### Acute Hepatitis B

This is a short-term illness that occurs within the first 6 months after someone is exposed to the Hepatitis B virus. An acute infection can range in severity from a mild illness with no symptoms to a serious condition that requires hospitalization. Some people are able to clear the virus without treatment and these people become immune and cannot get infected with the Hepatitis B virus again. However if the person is not able to clear the infection, acute infection can lead to chronic infection in most children and some adults.

### Chronic Hepatitis B

This is a lifelong infection with the Hepatitis B virus. Over time, chronic Hepatitis B can cause serious health problems, including liver damage, cirrhosis, liver cancer, and even death.

## Why should you get tested?

- Millions of Americans have Hepatitis B and most do not know it
- The Hepatitis B virus can survive outside of the body for up to 1 week
- Viral Hepatitis including type B is the leading cause of liver cancer and the leading need for liver transplants in the United States
- There are new treatments available to slow and prevent liver disease and the effects of the virus
- If you do not already have the virus, you can receive the vaccination to prevent the disease in the future

## How can you prevent Hepatitis B?

- There is a vaccination against the Hepatitis B virus given in 3 doses over 6 months
- The Hepatitis B vaccine is up to 95% effective at preventing the infection
- Currently in the United States, all infants are routinely given this vaccine which has led to decreasing rates of the infection

**If you are interested in testing, the vaccine, or more information, talk to your primary care doctor or your clinician at Horizon Health Services.**



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Sources:

CDC- Hepatitis B Q&A:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hbv/bfaq.htm>

CDC- Hepatitis B General Information:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hbv/pdfs/HepBGeneralFactSheet.pdf>

# Hepatitis C

## What is Hepatitis C and how is it spread?

Hepatitis C is a viral infection that causes liver inflammation and damage. Inflammation is swelling that occurs when tissues of the body become injured or infected. Hepatitis C is spread when someone comes in contact with an infected person's blood. Transmission can occur through sharing needles, syringes, or equipment to inject drugs, unlicensed tattoos or piercings, unprotected sex when you already have an STI or HIV, and organ transplants or blood donations prior to the 1990s. Many people with Hepatitis C infections do not have symptoms and do not know that they have the disease.

## How common is Hepatitis C?

In 2016, there were an estimated 2.4 million people living with Hepatitis C in the United States. There were 18,153 deaths related to Hepatitis C virus reported to CDC in 2016, but this is believed to be an underestimate.

## Who should get tested?

- Injected drugs, even just once many years ago
- Were born from 1945-1965 (Baby Boomers)
- Received donated blood or organs before 1992
- Received clotting factor before 1987
- Got a tattoo or body piercing from an unlicensed artist, such as on the street or while in jail
- Are HIV positive
- Were exposed to blood on the job through a needlestick or injury with a sharp object
- Were ever on long-term dialysis
- Snorted drugs
- Are men who have or had sex with men

## Why should you get tested?

- Millions of Americans have Hepatitis C and most do not know it
- The Hepatitis C virus can survive outside of the body for up to 3 weeks

## Signs and Symptoms

Many people who have Hepatitis C do not know because they do not look or feel sick. However, there may be symptoms including:

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Dark urine
- Clay-colored stool
- Abdominal pain
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Joint pain
- Jaundice

## Types of Hepatitis C Infections

### Acute Hepatitis C infection

Acute Hepatitis C infection is a short-term illness that occurs within the first six months after someone is exposed to the Hepatitis C virus. For about 8 out of 10 people, the acute infection leads to a chronic infection.

### Chronic Hepatitis C infection

Chronic hepatitis C infection is a long-term illness that occurs when the Hepatitis C virus remains in a person's body. If left untreated, the Hepatitis C infection can last a lifetime and lead to serious liver problems, including cirrhosis (scarring of the liver), liver failure, cancer and even death.

- People with the Hepatitis C virus can live for decades without showing symptoms or feeling sick
- Hepatitis C is the leading cause of liver cancer and the leading need for liver transplants
- There are new treatments available that can get rid of the Hepatitis C virus

## Where can you get tested for Hepatitis C?

### ERIE COUNTY

#### Community Access Services

3297 Bailey Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14215  
716-852-5969

#### Erie County Department of Health STD Clinic

95 Franklin Street, Buffalo, NY 14202  
716-858-7687

#### Evergreen Health Services

206 S. Elmwood Ave, Buffalo, NY 14201  
716-847-2441

#### ECMC-GEC/Hepatology

#### Dr. Anthony Martinez

Contact Angela Dieter, Case Worker,  
at [adieter@ecmc.edu](mailto:adieter@ecmc.edu)  
462 Grider St, Buffalo NY 14215  
716-898-4483

### NIAGARA COUNTY

#### Sexual Health Center

#### Niagara County Department of Health

1001-11th Street, Trott Access Center,  
1st Floor, Niagara Falls, NY 14301  
716-278-1900



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Sources:

Evergreen Health:

<https://www.evergreenhs.org/medical-services/hepatitis-c-care/>

CDC- Hepatitis C Q&A:

<https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hcv/faq.htm>

CDC- Hepatitis C General Information:

<https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/HCV/PDFs/HepCGeneralFactSheet.pdf>