

Easy B Facts

What is Hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B (HBV for short) is a virus that lives in human blood and body fluids (semen, vaginal secretions, etc.). HBV makes more copies of itself by infecting the liver. If you are infected with chronic hepatitis B over a long period of time, HBV may damage the liver to the point that it cannot perform the important jobs that it must do to keep you healthy.

There are two stages of HBV – acute and chronic. Acute infection is when you first get the infection and generally lasts for 6 months. If you still have the hepatitis

B virus after 6 months then you have chronic HBV.

The most common ways you can get hepatitis B are from getting hepatitis B-infected blood or body fluids into *your* body. Two of the most common ways that people get hepatitis B is during birth when the virus is passed from an infected mother to her newborn during birth or from having sex with someone who has HBV. Sharing needles when injecting drugs or getting stuck with a needle can also transmit HBV.

Remember.....

There are many ways to protect yourself from getting hepatitis B:

- ◆ Get vaccinated against hepatitis B if you are not already protected
- ◆ Practice safer sex with the use of barriers during sex
- ◆ Always follow universal precautions—that is putting a barrier between you and other people's blood and body fluids

If you have chronic hepatitis B, be sure to get checked regularly and find out if you should be treated.



HBV ADVOCATE
www.hbvadvocate.org

Hepatitis C
Support Project

VERSION 4 .3 • July 2015
Alan Franciscus