

Easy B Facts

The Immune System

Your body has an **immune system**. This system acts like an army whose job it is to protect your health. Your immune system is made up of cells and organs. These protect you from **foreign invaders**, such as germs.

It's your immune system's job to find and destroy these germs. Your liver has an important role in your immune system. Your liver produces all sorts of things that protect you and keep you healthy. Without it you would be under constant **attack from germs** that could cause you to become very sick or even die.

Germs come in lots of types. Bacteria, parasites and viruses – **hepatitis B (HBV for short) is a type of virus**. If HBV tries to attack your body, your immune system does everything it can

to fight it off. Some peoples' immune systems **successfully defend** them against HBV when they are first infected. The immune systems of infants and children do not fight it off as well as adults. This is why so many children and infants get chronic or life-long infection. In adults, only about 5 people out of 100 will develop life-long infection. When people get rid of HBV, their blood will carry proof that their immune system fought against HBV. This proof is known as **HBV antibodies**. Antibodies are like having battle scars after the enemy has long left the field. Most infants and babies go on to have chronic HBV, but most adults don't. Because HBV is a virus that can mess up your health, it's a good idea to take care of your immune system.

There are many things you can do to stay healthy...

- Eat healthy food; avoid alcohol and street drugs
- Get regular check-ups with your doctor
- Get plenty of sleep along with daily exercise
- If you need to, get vaccinated against hepatitis A
- If you are pregnant, get tested for HBV. If you do have HBV, your doctor will help you try to keep your baby healthy.



HBV ADVOCATE

www.hbvadvocate.org

**Hepatitis C
Support Project**

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