

Easy B Facts

Chronic HBV

When you have hepatitis B, you can get a brief or short-lived infection, called “acute” hepatitis B, or you can develop a long-term infection called “chronic” infection.

Whether or not you develop chronic hepatitis B depends on your age and your health.

When babies are born to mothers infected with the hepatitis B virus (HBV), 90% (9 out of 10 of them) will develop a chronic hepatitis B infection unless the baby is given certain medications to protect it from getting chronic hepatitis B within 12 hours of birth. It also helps if mothers with lots of HBV in their bodies are given antivirals during pregnancy to lower their viral load.

When teens or adults get acute HBV, the chances of getting a chronic infection falls to about 6% (6 out of 100 people). Their immune systems are strong enough to fight off the infection.

But for some people the immune system doesn't work as well and the hepatitis B virus can keep multiplying and over time may cause damage to the liver. These people will develop chronic hepatitis B.

Remember

- To find out if you have – or have had – hepatitis B, a blood sample will be taken and analyzed for hepatitis B blood proteins called HBV antigens. They will show if you have chronic hepatitis B, or if you had acute hepatitis B, or if you've been vaccinated in the past.
- If you test positive for an HBV protein called the surface antigen (HBsAg) for longer than six months, you have chronic or long-term hepatitis B.



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**Hepatitis C
Support Project**

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