

Hepatitis B and You



**for pregnant women and
new moms**

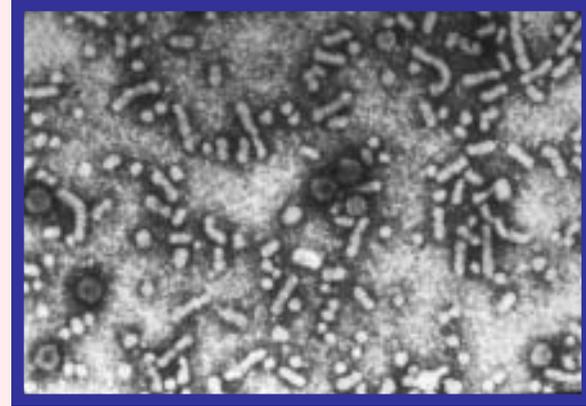


Division of Viral Hepatitis
National Center for Infectious Diseases
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Special thanks to:
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Suffolk County Department of Health Services
Bureau of Public Health Nursing

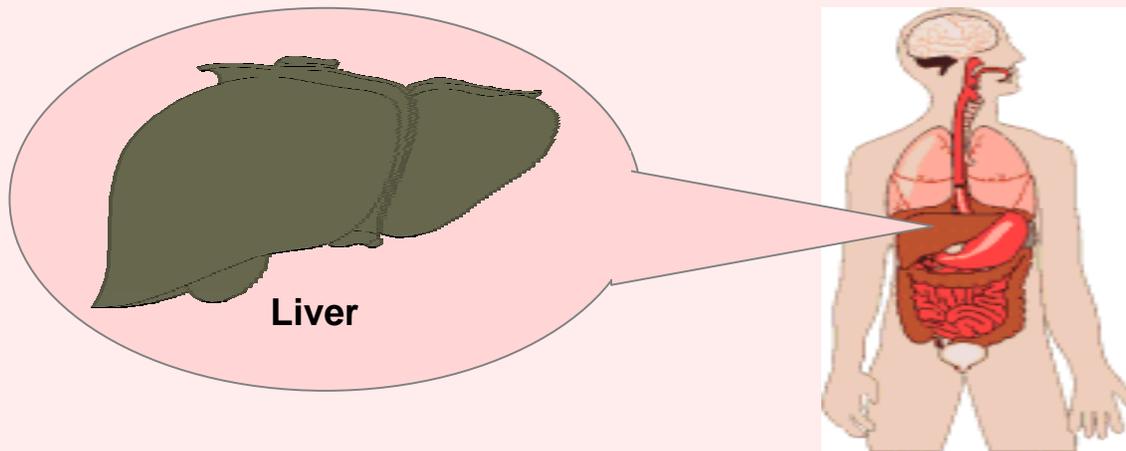
What is hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is a germ (virus) that gets into your body and attacks your liver.



Hepatitis B Virus

Your liver helps your body digest the food you eat and store energy. It also helps your body get rid of poisons.

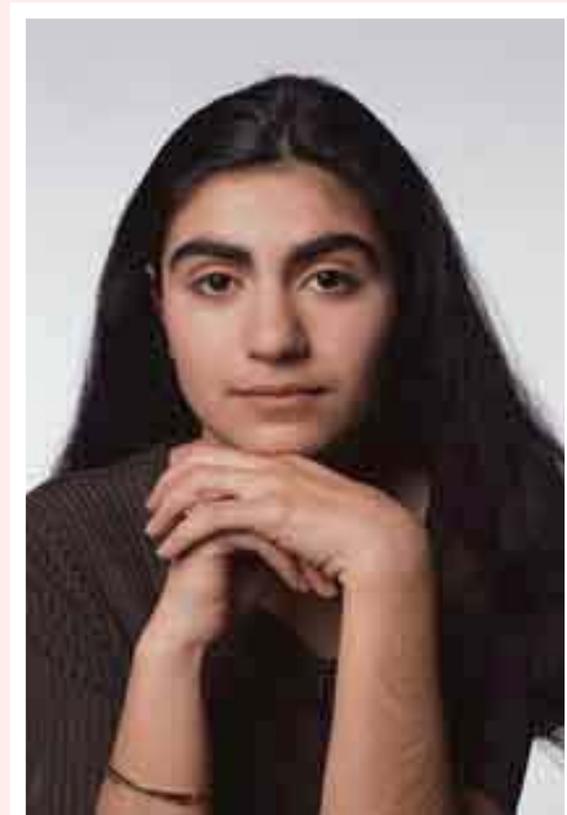


Will I die from hepatitis B?

Most people do not die from it.

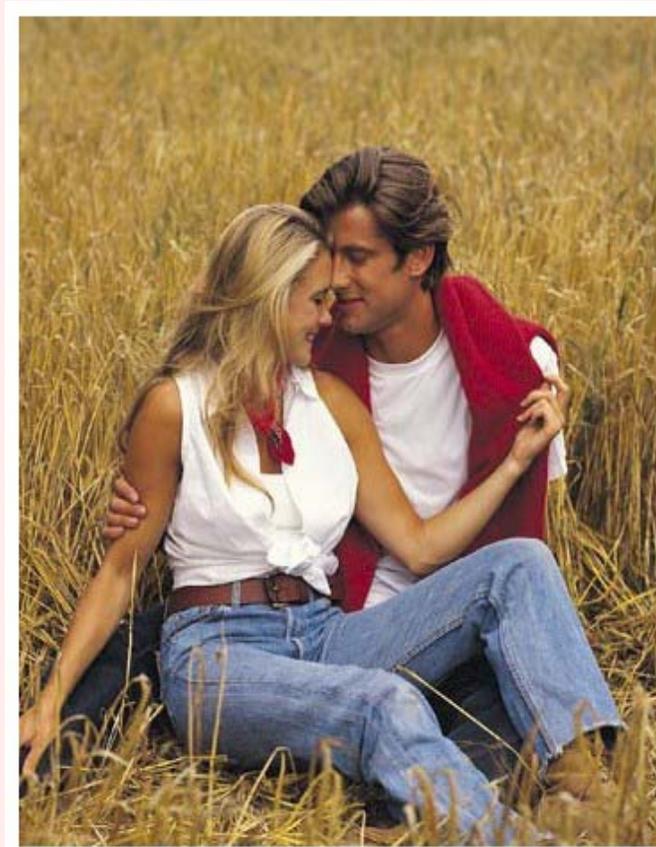
There are cases where hepatitis B can cause liver damage (cirrhosis [*sir-O-sis*]) that does not go away.

Hepatitis B can also cause liver cancer, which may lead to death. Good medical care can make your risk less for these.



How do you get hepatitis B?

It is passed by contact with the blood or other body fluids of someone who has the virus.



Main Ways to Get Hepatitis B

1 Having sex without condoms with someone who has hepatitis B

2 Being born to a mother who has hepatitis B

3 Sharing needles and syringes

You can pass hepatitis B to others if you have just gotten the virus (acute hepatitis) or if you are a carrier of the virus (chronic hepatitis).

Will I ever get rid of the virus?

- The hepatitis B virus takes about 2 months to show up in your blood. It may stay in your blood for months or years.

Acute Hepatitis B.

- 9 out of every 10 adults will get rid of the virus from their bodies after a few months. We say they have *acute* hepatitis B.

Chronic Hepatitis B.

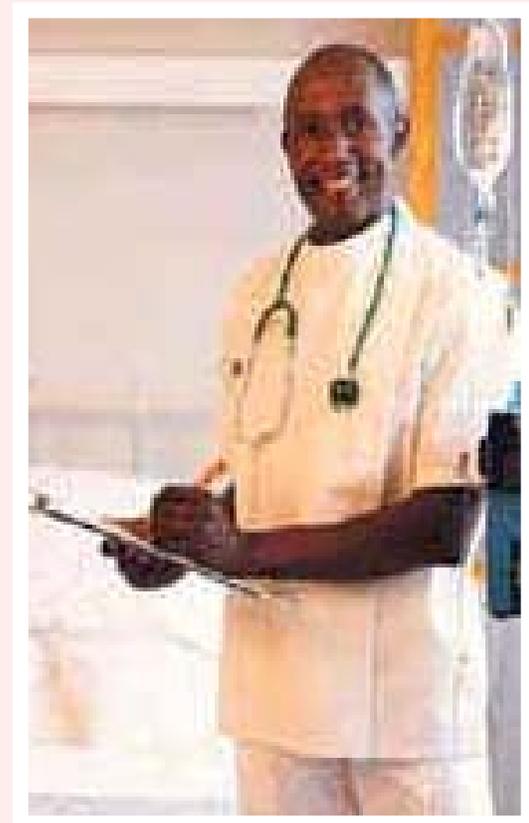
- 1 out of every 10 adults will never get rid of the virus from their bodies. We say they have *chronic* hepatitis B. They are called carriers.

Treatment for Chronic Hepatitis B

Check with your doctor about treatment for chronic hepatitis B. Most people will remain carriers of the virus if they do not get treated.

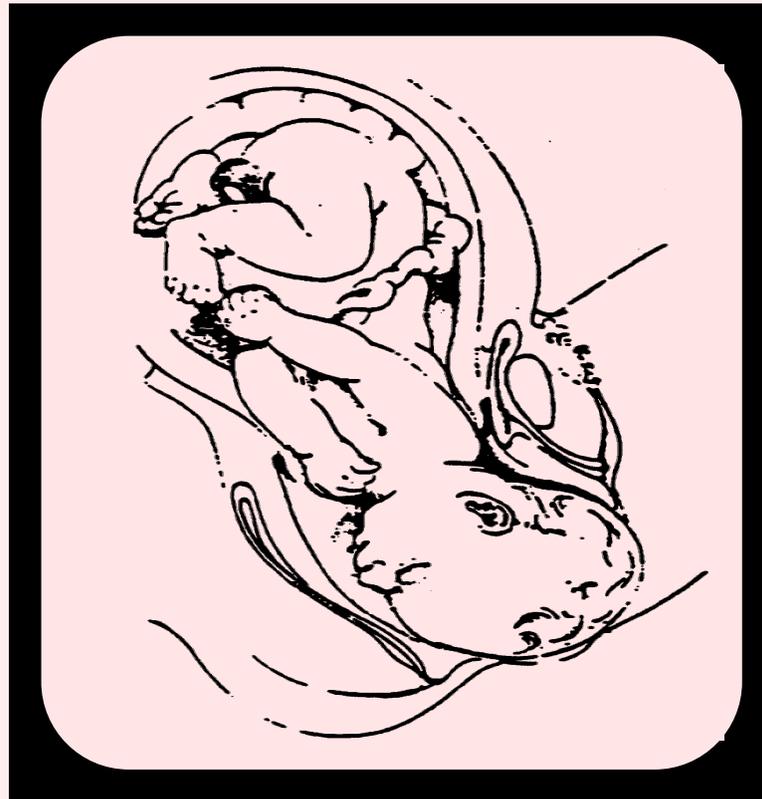
The best things carriers can do:

- ✓ make sure their babies get all of their hepatitis B shots
- ✓ make sure they do not spread it to others
- ✓ get good health care



How does my baby get hepatitis B from me?

- If you have hepatitis B and a tiny bit of your blood gets inside your baby at birth.

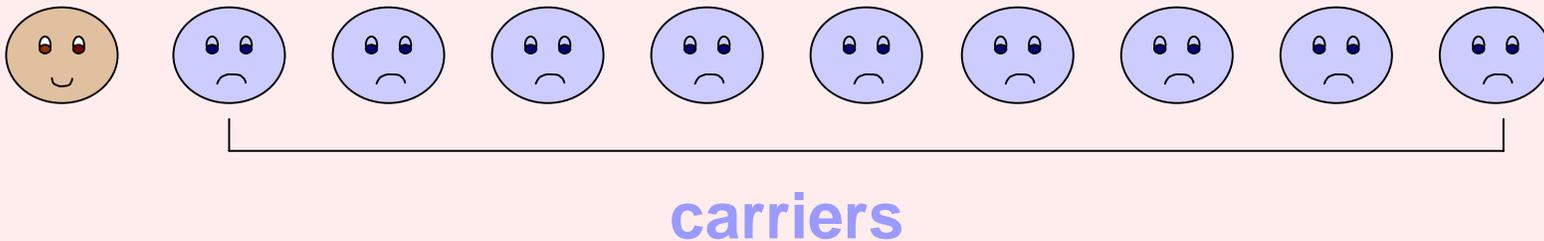


Can I breast-feed my baby if I have hepatitis B?

- **YES!** If your baby gets a shot called **H-BIG** and a shot of **hepatitis B vaccine** within 12 hours of birth, it is okay for you to start breast-feeding your baby right away.
- Be sure to take good care of your nipple areas to prevent cracking and bleeding.

Can my baby die from hepatitis B?

- **Most babies do not die from hepatitis B.**
 - Up to 9 out of 10 babies born to infected mothers will end up being hepatitis B carriers for the rest of their lives, if they do not get the shots.



- If you make sure your babies get **all 3 shots**, plus a shot called **H-BIG**, they have a 95% chance of being safe from hepatitis B for life.

Baby Shots for Hepatitis B

if the mother has Hepatitis B

Birth

**Hepatitis B
Vaccine**



+

H-BIG



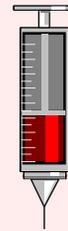
1 - 2 months old

**Hepatitis B
Vaccine**



6 months old

**Hepatitis B
Vaccine**



What do the baby shots do?

- These shots help babies' bodies make antibodies, which protect them from hepatitis B.
- When an adult or baby has antibodies for hepatitis B, this helps fight off the virus.
- A few months after your baby gets **H-BIG and all 3 shots**, the doctor will do a simple blood test. The test tells you if your baby is making antibodies.
- Be sure to ask your doctor about this blood test.

What if my baby does not get these shots?



Up to 9 out of 10 babies born to infected mothers will end up **being carriers for the rest of their lives**, if they do not get the shots.



Babies who end up as carriers have a **1 out of 4 chance of dying** from liver problems.



19 out of 20 babies who get the shots will be protected for life!

I worry about giving the hepatitis B shots to my baby.

- Hepatitis B shots are safe for your baby. They will not affect the way your baby grows.
- If your baby gets the virus instead of the shots, your baby is likely to have bad liver damage.



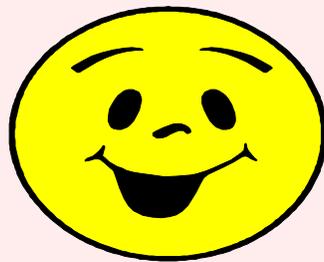
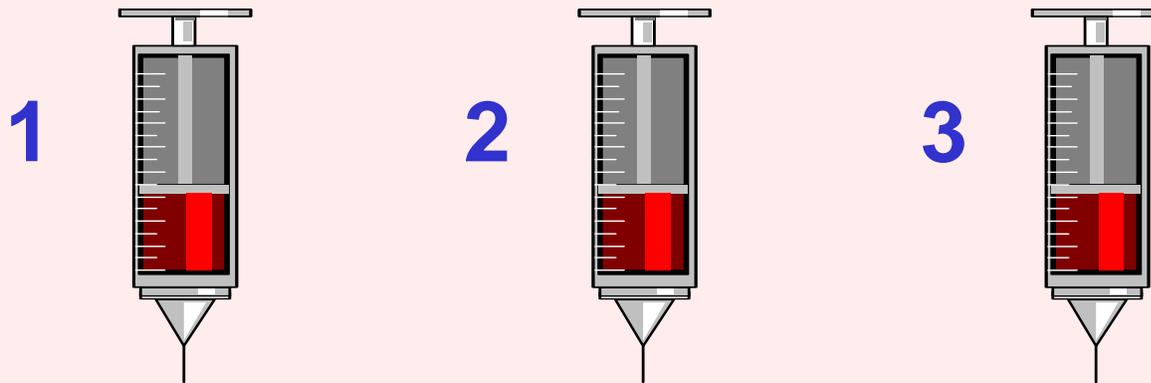
Why do my sex partner and people living with me need to be tested?

- Since hepatitis B virus can be passed to them, they should be tested to see if they have this virus in their bodies.
- If they do not have the hepatitis B virus, they should get the shots to protect themselves.



Hepatitis B can be prevented!

If you have never had hepatitis B,
you can get 3 shots . . .



. . . and get long lasting protection.