

# HEPATITIS B & YOUR FAMILY



## Information for People from Africa

### What is Hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is a disease caused by the Hepatitis B virus. It can cause serious health problems over time. The virus can make some people very sick. The disease is very common in many parts of the world, including Africa.

### How is Hepatitis B spread?

People get Hepatitis B when they come into contact with blood from a person who has the virus. Hepatitis B can be passed from an infected mother to her baby at birth or from a family member to young children. The virus can also be spread through sex with an infected person. Hepatitis B is passed the same way as HIV, but spreads more easily. Hepatitis B is not spread through breastfeeding, hugging, kissing, holding hands, coughing, or sneezing.

### Do people with Hepatitis B feel sick?

Most people live with Hepatitis B for many years without feeling sick. Over time, Hepatitis B can lead to liver damage, liver failure, and even liver cancer. Getting tested for Hepatitis B is usually the only way for people to know if they have Hepatitis B.

### Should other people be tested for Hepatitis B?

Yes. When a person has Hepatitis B, doctors will want to test all sexual partners, family members, and people living in the same house for Hepatitis B. It is important for these people to get tested because doctors can help them stay healthy. People who have Hepatitis B should get medical treatment. Others who do not have the disease should get the Hepatitis B vaccine. This protects them from getting the virus.



Getting tested for Hepatitis B can help you take care of yourself and protect your family.

### Why is the Hepatitis B vaccine important?

A Hepatitis B vaccine prevents people from getting Hepatitis B. All babies born in the United States and many other countries get the vaccine at birth. Any other family member or sexual partner of people with Hepatitis B should also get the vaccine. The vaccine is safe and works for people who have never been infected with Hepatitis B.

### For More Information

Talk to your doctor, call your local health department, or visit [www.cdc.gov/hepatitis](http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis) for information in English.



U.S. Department of  
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[www.cdc.gov/hepatitis](http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis)

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