

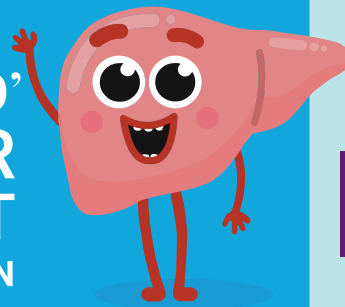
## Why your liver is important

Just about everything you eat and everything you drink goes through your liver. Even chemicals that touch your skin and toxins that you breathe in pass through your liver.

Your liver has around 500 different jobs that keep your body working at its best. The two most important jobs are cleaning your blood and helping with digestion. A healthy liver also helps with energy, fights infection, and gets rid of harmful toxins.

But a damaged liver can't do these jobs properly. So it's vital to keep your liver healthy.

**SAY 'HELLO' TO YOUR HARDEST WORKING ORGAN**



### Facts about the liver:

- It is the largest internal organ.
- It is located on the right-hand side of your body, behind your ribs.
- It can repair itself and create new, healthy liver tissue.
- It breaks down and absorbs fats in the body.
- There are 1.5 litres of blood flowing through your liver every minute.

## Treatment

For chronic hepatitis B, effective treatment and monitoring can manage the disease from progressing.

Not everyone with chronic hepatitis B requires treatment because in some people the virus is present in small amounts. However, it is important that everyone with chronic hepatitis B visits the doctor for regular liver check-ups.

Treatment consists of a type of medication called anti-viral tablets. This medication will not cure the virus however it works by stopping the hepatitis B virus from multiplying or by slowing it down as much as possible. This reduces your risk of getting serious liver disease.

These tablets are taken daily, often for a year or longer. The type of tablet depends on your previous medical history and current medications used. Talk to your doctor about which medication is right for you.

## Talking about your concerns

If you are concerned talk to your doctor who can run tests to measure how your liver is working.

If you need treatment, your doctor will prescribe medication to help your liver and will monitor your progress.

**Liver treatment for hepatitis B can be accessed at a low cost through Medicare.**

Your doctor can also refer you to liver specialists.

An up-to-date directory of liver clinics and liver specialists is listed on the Hepatitis Victoria website.

Try talking to friends and family for practical and emotional support. You can also talk to health providers – including nurses, counsellors, therapists, pharmacists, dieticians and nutritionists.

## Practical tips for staying healthy

The free LiverWELL™ app developed by Hepatitis Victoria has lots of tips on how to keep your liver healthy:



eating well: cut back on foods that are high in fat and sugar



getting active: try some exercise everyday



feeling well: take care of yourself emotionally, spiritually and physically



drink aware: do not drink alcohol.

For information and practical tips on managing your liver health, visit: [www.liverwell.org.au](http://www.liverwell.org.au) or download the LiverWELL™ app

**LiverWELL™**



## Finding support

### Hepatitis Infoline - Call 1800 703 003

Free and anonymous. Trained professionals listen to your concerns and provide further information.

### Useful Websites

[www.liverwell.org.au](http://www.liverwell.org.au)

[www.loveyourliver.com.au](http://www.loveyourliver.com.au)

[www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

[www.hepvic.org.au](http://www.hepvic.org.au)

[www.cancervic.org.au](http://www.cancervic.org.au)

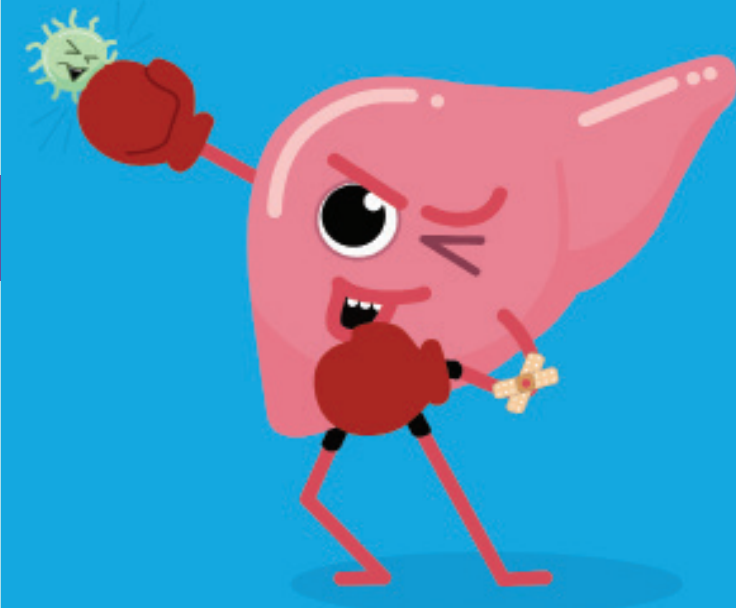
[www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)

**HEPATITIS VICTORIA**  
**LiverWELL™**

[www.hepvic.org.au](http://www.hepvic.org.au)    [info@hepvic.org.au](mailto:info@hepvic.org.au)  
Hepatitis Infoline: 1800 703 003

Produced by Hepatitis Victoria. This information is general in nature and not intended as medical advice. Consult your doctor for further information.

# Hepatitis B



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**LiverWELL™**

# What is hepatitis B?

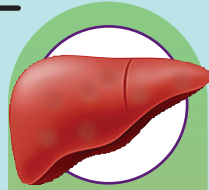
# How do you get hepatitis B?

# Testing

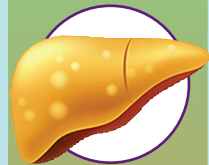
# To check

## Your Liver

Progression may take 20-30 years



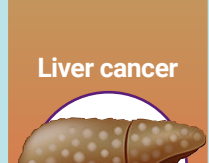
Inflammation



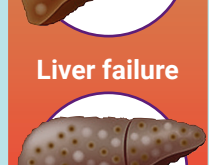
Fibrosis



Cirrhosis



Liver cancer



Liver failure

Hepatitis B is a blood borne virus that causes inflammation of the liver.

If untreated, hepatitis B can cause scarring and hardening of the liver tissue. This is called fibrosis. Bad scarring is called cirrhosis. This scarring means the liver cannot work properly.

Untreated hepatitis B increases the risk of liver failure and liver cancer.

### Symptoms

Often people living with hepatitis B feel no symptoms. However, symptoms may include:

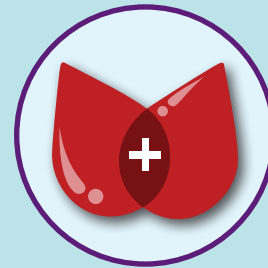
- feeling tired
- nausea and low appetite
- flu like symptoms
- jaundice (yellowing of skin and eyes)
- abdominal pain the liver area (behind ribs on the right side of your belly)

### The good news!

Regular checkups and effective medication can reduce the likelihood of developing more serious liver diseases.

Hepatitis B is transmitted by blood to blood and sexual fluid contact.

This means that the blood/sexual fluid of someone living with hepatitis B gets into someone else's blood/body.



### Higher risks

- partner to partner through sexual contact
- mother-to-child at birth
- sharing injecting equipment
- unsterile tattoos and piercings
- blood transfusions and medical procedures performed overseas
- blood transfusions in Australia **before** 1990

### Lower risks

- needle stick injuries
- blood to blood contact in fights
- sharing razors and toothbrushes
- breastfeeding

### Hepatitis B is not transmitted by:

- sneezing
- kissing
- coughing
- hugging
- sharing food or eating utensils

Testing for hepatitis B involves a simple blood test. Any GP (family doctor) can organise these blood tests.

### HEP B TEST RESULTS WILL TELL YOU IF YOU HAVE...

#### A CURRENT INFECTION - YOU HAVE HEP B RIGHT NOW

**2ND HEP B TEST** ( 6 months later ). Take the test again to see if you still have hep B (If you have had it for more than 6 months it means your body can't fight it off)

#### CHRONIC HEP B

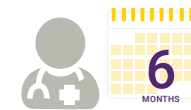
You have had hep B for MORE than 6 months. This means you **WILL** have hep B for life.

#### RESOLVED HEP B INFECTION

You had hep B but your body fought it off. You can't get hep B again.

#### CHECK-UPS EVERY 6 MONTHS.

Your sexual partners or family might have hep B too. Talk to them about getting tested.



#### YOUR SEXUAL PARTNERS OR FAMILY MIGHT HAVE HEP B TOO.

Talk to them about getting tested.



#### IMMUNITY (VACCINATION)

You have been vaccinated and are immune to hep B. You can't get hep B.

#### IMMUNITY (past infection)

You are immune to hep B. You had hep B in the past, but your body fought it off. You can't get hep B again.

#### NO IMMUNITY

You don't have hep B, but you **could still get it**.

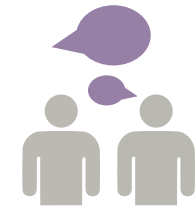
#### NO ACTION NEEDED

You are protected against hep B and can't get it.



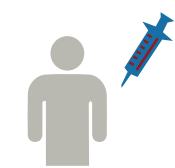
#### YOUR FAMILY MIGHT HAVE HEP B TOO.

talk to them about getting tested.



#### GET VACCINATED FOR HEP B

Ask your doctor or nurse, community health clinic, sexual health clinic, travel clinic or AMS about getting vaccinated.



## Vaccination

While no cure currently exists, hepatitis B can be prevented through safe and effective vaccination. Adults require 3 vaccinations for complete protection. The recommended schedule is:

### Vaccination for Adults

0 month (day of vaccination)	1st vaccination
1 month	2nd vaccination
6 months	3rd vaccination

## To prevent

Babies and children require 4 vaccinations for complete protection. Babies should receive their first vaccination within 24 hours of being born.

### Vaccination for Children

Birth	1 <sup>st</sup> vaccination
2 months	2 <sup>nd</sup> vaccination
4 months	3 <sup>rd</sup> vaccination
6 months	4 <sup>th</sup> vaccination

\*Children born in Australia are vaccinated against hepatitis B as part of the national immunisation program.