

# Hepatitis B

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## Key Points

- Hepatitis is inflammation of liver
- Hepatitis B can be passed on via unprotected sex (sex without a condom), contaminated needles and from a pregnant woman to her baby during birth.
- Hepatitis can be of acute and chronic onset.
- People with chronic hepatitis B are at higher risk of developing liver failure, liver disease and liver cancer.
- Treatment for chronic hepatitis B include Antiviral medications and liver transplant in severe cases.

## Introduction of Hepatitis:

Hepatitis is inflammation of liver. When liver is inflamed or damaged its functions can be affected. Liver is the vital organ that processes nutrients, filters the blood and fights infections.

## Types of Hepatitis:

There are five types of Hepatitis namely; Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, Hepatitis D and Hepatitis E. **Hepatitis B:** Hepatitis B (also known as hep B or HBV) is part of a group of hepatitis viruses that attack the liver. It can be passed on via unprotected sex (sex without a condom) through contaminated needles and from a pregnant woman to her baby during birth.

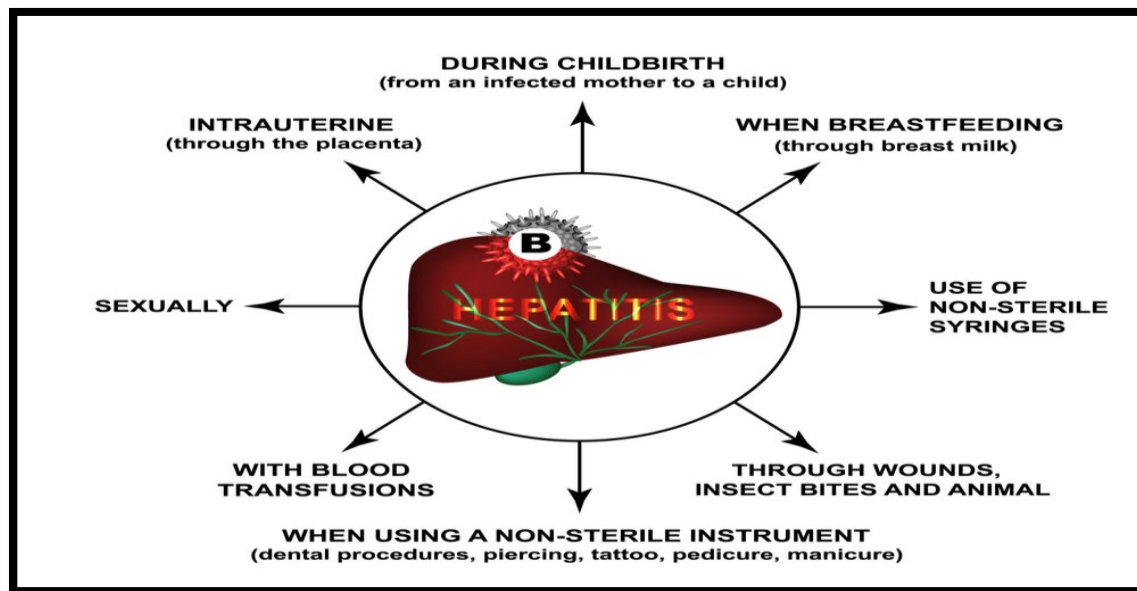


Figure showing routes of transmission of Hepatitis B<sup>1</sup>

## Symptoms of Hepatitis B:

Many people with hepatitis B don't have any symptoms. Symptoms may go unnoticed for two or three months after infection. Symptoms are based on

the types of infection. There are two types of infection – acute and chronic.

Acute (or short-term) symptoms include; flu-like symptoms, tiredness, fever and aches and pains, feeling of being sick, loss of weight and apatite,

diarrhea, abdominal pain, jaundice (skin and the whites of r eyes turning yellow), dark urine and pale feaces.

People who can't fight off acute infection after six months, such as babies, young children and people with a weakened immune system because of HIV, can go on to develop chronic hepatitis B. This is when people are at higher risk of liver failure, liver disease and cancer of the liver.<sup>1</sup>

Pregnant woman with hepatitis B can pass the virus on to their unborn baby, which is why women are routinely tested for hepatitis B as part of prenatal care. In almost all cases, an infection can be prevented if the infant receives the recommended vaccinations in time. Infants infected at birth are more likely to develop chronic hepatitis B and go on to develop liver complications, so it's important to talk to your doctor if you have any questions and follow any advice they give.<sup>2</sup>

### **Investigation of Hepatitis B:**

A simple blood test and a complete liver profile, ultrasound and CT scan carried out by a healthcare professional will show the possibility of presence of the virus in the body.

Person with hepatitis B should be tested for other sexually transmitted infections. It's important to tell recent sexual partner/s so they can also get tested and treated. Many people who have hepatitis B don't notice anything wrong, and by telling them one can help to stop the virus being passed on. This can also stop you from getting the infection again.<sup>3</sup>

### **Treatment of Hepatitis B:**

Treatment for chronic hepatitis B may include: Antiviral medications. Several antiviral medications — including entecavir (Baraclude), tenofovir (Viread), lamivudine (Epivir), adefovir (Hepsera) and telbivudine (Tyzeka) — can help fight the virus and slow its ability to damage the liver. A small number of people with cirrhosis develop liver cancer, and these

complications can lead to death. Other than a liver transplant, there is no cure for cirrhosis. However, treatments can help relieve some of the symptoms.<sup>4</sup>

### **REFERNCES**

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