



Compiled by: Cerba Lancet Laboratories RSA

# How common is Chronic Hepatitis B?

- Chronic Hepatitis B is known to be a global problem.
- More than 250 million people are chronically infected with Hepatitis B virus.
- Chronic infection causes more than 650 000 deaths each year.

# How likely is it that acute Hepatitis B will become chronic?

- The likelihood depends on the age at which a person becomes infected.
- The younger a person is when they are infected with Hepatitis B virus, the greater the chance that the infection will become chronic.
- Approximately 90% of infants who are infected around the time of birth will develop chronic infection.
- The risk decreases as you get older, dropping to around 5% if you are infected as an adult.

## How is Hepatitis B spread?

Hepatitis B virus is spread when blood, semen or other body fluids infected with the virus, enters the body of an uninfected person. Potentially hazardous activities include:

- 1. Having unprotected sex with an infected partner.
- 2. During birth. (When the virus spreads from the mother to her baby.)
- 3. Exposure to blood through needle sticks or other injuries caused by sharp instruments.
- 4. Sharing drug-injection equipment such as: needles and syringes. (Including sharing infected needles for acupuncture, piercings and tattooing.)
- 5. Sharing items such as toothbrushes or razors with an infected person.
- 6. Direct contact with the blood or open sores of an infected person.
- 7. The majority of adults who are infected with Hepatitis B virus will develop symptoms, while the majority of young children do not.



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# HEPATITIS IMMUNIZATION

Your best shot to protect yourself & others against hepatitis.

Hepatitis B virus is NOT spread by: food, water, sharing eating utensils, coughing, sneezing, hugging, kissing, holding hands or breast feeding.



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## How can I avoid infecting others with Hepatitis B?

If you have Hepatitis B infection you can reduce your chances of giving Hepatitis B to other people through the following:

- Discuss the infection with any sexual partners and use a condom during all sexual encounters.
- Nothing with blood on that includes razors and toothbrushes, should be shared.
- Avoid donating blood, sperm, or organs.
- · Cover any open wounds, scratches, or sores.
- Immediately clean up any blood spills with detergent or bleach.
- Make certain that your immediate family and household contacts are tested to determine whether they need the Hepatitis B vaccination.
- You can participate in any activity, including contact sports.
- Children with Hepatitis B should not be separated from their peers.

#### How will I know if I have Hepatitis B?

If you are concerned that you have Hepatitis B, consult your doctor. **A blood test** will be performed to determine whether you are infected. Chronic hepatitis B is diagnosed when the virus has been found in the body for more than 6 months.

#### How is acute Hepatitis B treated?

People who are infected with Hepatitis B heal on their own; no specific Hepatitis B virus treatment is required. Over the next few weeks, you possibly should drink a great deal of water and eat nourishing foods. You ought to refrain from anything that will put extra strain on your liver, such as Alcohol.

## How is chronic Hepatitis B treated?

Some individuals with chronic Hepatitis B require medication. Your healthcare provider will check on you on a regular basis for signs of liver disease. This may include regular blood tests, an ultrasound examination of the liver, and even removing a small piece of the liver for testing, called a Biopsy.

## How likely is it that acute Hepatitis B will become chronic?

- The likelihood of an infection is determined by the age at which a person becomes infected.
- The younger a person is when infected with the Hepatitis B virus, the more likely the infection will become chronic.
- Approximately 90% of infants infected shortly after birth will develop chronic infection.
- The risk decreases with age, reaching around 5% if you are infected as an adult.

## Symptoms of acute Hepatitis B include:



These symptoms usually last for a couple of weeks but some people may remain sick for up to six months. People who have chronic Hepatitis B generally exhibit no symptoms, nevertheless they can develop serious Liver problems such as scarring (called Cirrhosis) and Liver cancer over time.



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