

Thursday, 03 August 2023

[Health Protection](#)



Hepatitis B Factsheet for patients

What is hepatitis B?

Hepatitis means inflammation of the liver. There are several different viruses which cause hepatitis, and hepatitis B is one of these.

What are the symptoms of hepatitis B?

Many people never have any symptoms of acute hepatitis B, but if there are any, symptoms will appear between six weeks and six months after being infected. Some adults notice a short flu-like illness which may not be diagnosed as hepatitis B. More serious symptoms such as vomiting, tummy pain and yellow jaundice may occur, and will need treatment from a doctor. Rarely, acute infection causes a very severe illness which can lead to death.

Acute and chronic hepatitis B

Hepatitis B can cause an acute or a chronic illness.

An acute illness is one that gets better quite quickly, usually within weeks or at most a few months.

Most adults recover fully from acute hepatitis B, normally within six months.

Chronic hepatitis B is hepatitis B which lasts longer than six months. Some people with chronic hepatitis B remain healthy but about a quarter will develop long-term liver disease. Most are infectious and must take precautions to avoid passing on the virus (see below).

How do you get hepatitis B?

In this country, in Europe and in North America, hepatitis B is mainly passed from person to person through unprotected sex. Worldwide, most people get hepatitis B by contact with infected blood, especially when babies are born to infected mothers and are not vaccinated immediately after birth.

Sex

Hepatitis B can be passed on during unprotected sex with an infected person. If you are concerned about sexually-transmitted disease, you can get confidential advice from the Sexual health/Genitourinary Medicine (GUM) clinics listed at the end of this leaflet.

Factsheet for patients who have tested positive for the hepatitis B virus.

The factsheet is only available by contacting the Duty Room on **0300 555 0119**. Some of the translations below are based on a previous version of this factsheet.

Details

Format

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Target group

Patients who have tested positive for the hepatitis B virus.

Downloads

Attachment	Size
Hep B factsheet for patients English	419.5 KB
Hep B factsheet for patients Arabic	323.34 KB
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