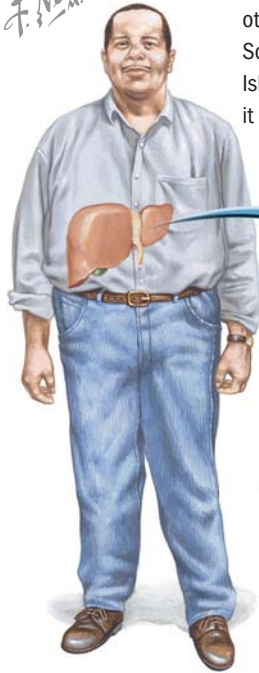


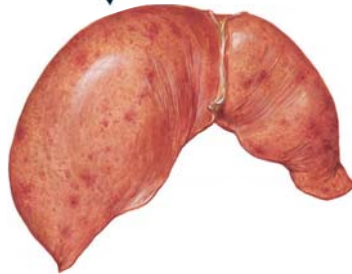
# MANAGING YOUR HEPATITIS B

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Hepatitis B is a viral infection of the liver. People get infected by contact with infected blood and other body fluids. Mothers can give it to babies. Some groups (African Americans, Asians, Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, and Native Americans) get it more often than others.



Liver with hepatitis



## Symptoms of hepatitis B

Jaundice



Itching



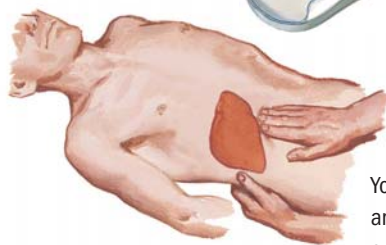
Flu-like symptoms, fatigue, fever



Pale or clay-colored stools, dark urine



Abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting



Your doctor will examine you and do a blood test to find antibody to the virus.



## What Is Hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is infection of the liver with a virus. More than 1 million people in the United States are carriers of the virus. About 200,000 people get this disease each year. Certain racial and ethnic groups, including African Americans, Asians, Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, and Native Americans, have higher rates of infection.

About 90% of people recover completely in a few months. Others become carriers or chronically infected. Hepatitis B is a serious disease, and about 1% of people die during the acute stage.

## What Causes Hepatitis B?

The cause is the hepatitis B virus. The virus is passed to others by sexual contact with infected people and using nonsterile needles. Infected blood and other body fluids (e.g., semen, vaginal secretions, breast milk, tears, saliva, and fluid in open sores) can spread the virus. Infected mothers can give it to babies.

## What Are the Symptoms of Hepatitis B?

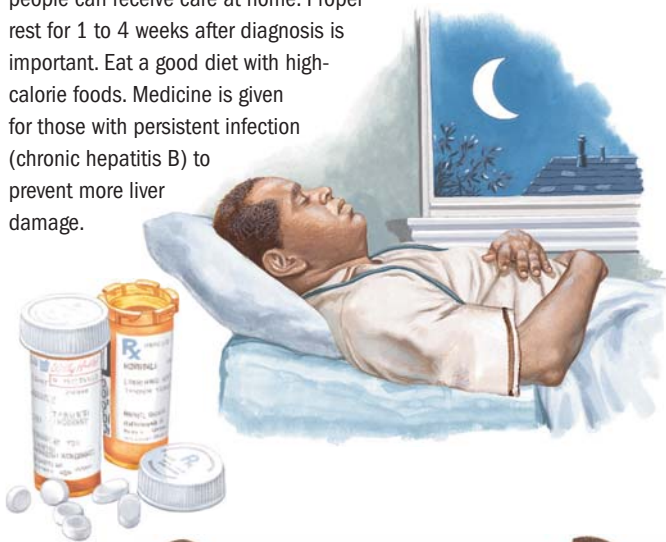
Not all people have symptoms. If they do occur they usually appear within 6 months from when the infection is acquired. First symptoms may be rashes, joint pains, fatigue, and other flu-like symptoms. Then, jaundice (yellow skin or whites of the eyes) may occur. Other symptoms are pale or clay-colored stools, dark urine, itching, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, low-grade fever, and pain in the abdomen (belly). Severe disease may lead to cirrhosis (liver scarring), fluid in the abdomen (ascites), and liver failure.

## How Is Hepatitis B Diagnosed?

The doctor will do an examination and blood test to show the presence of the virus in the blood (hepatitis B antigens) and the body's response to the infection (hepatitis B antibodies). Liver function tests will also be abnormal.

## MANAGING YOUR HEPATITIS B

No treatment exists for acute disease. Most people can receive care at home. Proper rest for 1 to 4 weeks after diagnosis is important. Eat a good diet with high-calorie foods. Medicine is given for those with persistent infection (chronic hepatitis B) to prevent more liver damage.



Follow up with your doctor.



Don't drink alcohol.



Don't share needles, donate blood, or breast-feed your baby if you have hepatitis.

### FROM THE DESK OF

#### NOTES

### How Is Hepatitis B Treated?

No treatment exists for acute disease. Most people can receive care at home. Activity is as tolerated. Proper rest for 1 to 4 weeks after diagnosis is beneficial. During this time, intimate contact with other people should be avoided. The diet should be high in calories. People who come in contact with infected people and newborns of infected mothers should be given immune globulin plus hepatitis B vaccine within 2 weeks of exposure.

Medicine is given to those with persistent infection (chronic hepatitis B) to prevent more liver damage.

### DOs and DON'Ts in Managing Hepatitis B:

- ✓ **DO** get plenty of rest and eat a well-balanced diet.
- ✓ **DO** use condoms when having sex.
- ✓ **DO** avoid exposing others to your blood and other body fluids.
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if symptoms don't go away in 4 or 6 weeks or new symptoms develop.
- ✓ **DO** ask your doctor about vaccines for family members and others close to you.
- ⊗ **DON'T** drink alcohol or take medications such as acetaminophen that can further damage your liver.
- ⊗ **DON'T** share needles, donate blood, or breast-feed your baby.
- ⊗ **DON'T** have sex with an infected person or carrier.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

#### Contact the following sources:

- American Liver Foundation  
Tel: (800) 465-4837  
Website: <http://www.liverfoundation.org/>
- Hepatitis Foundation International  
Tel: (800) 891-0707  
Website: <http://www.hepfi.org/>