

## RISK FACTORS

You are at greater than average risk of HBV if you:

- Were born to a mother infected by HBV
- Work or live in a place that causes exposure to blood
- Receiving hemodialysis treatments (patient with kidney disease)
- Having unprotected sexual contact with an infected person or multiple partners
- Have a sexually transmitted disease
- Are a man who has sex with other men
- Getting tattoos or body piercing
- Share equipment for inhaling cocaine or share needles
- Share grooming or hygiene items like razors, toothbrushes, and nail files or clippers
- Travel internationally to places where HBV is common, then are exposed in one of the ways described above
- Adults that have diabetes and have shared glucose testing equipment with others
- Live in a home with an individual that has hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a treatable liver disease, caused by a virus. Working with the doctor and staff at GI Associates, you can minimize your risk of this potential threat to the health of your liver.

# HEPATITIS B (HBV)



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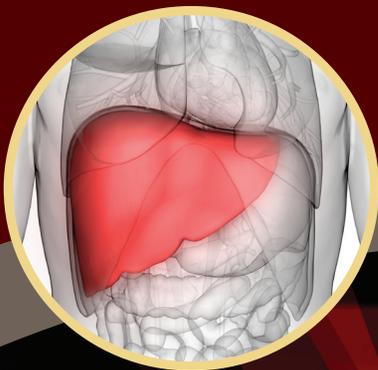


## WHAT IS HBV?

*Hepatitis* is an inflammation and swelling of the liver that can cause harm or death of liver cells. The most common types of hepatitis are types A, B and C, each caused by viruses. The effects of having Hepatitis range from mild symptoms to life-threatening illness.

About 95% of adult patients with HBV may have it for a short time (acute HBV), get better without treatment and the virus clears from the blood. The other 5% have HBV long term (chronic HBV) and it does not clear from the blood. Untreated, chronic HBV can permanently scar the liver, leading to cirrhosis, liver cancer, and other complications.

HBV is spread through blood and other body fluids such as semen and vaginal fluids. A tiny amount of infected blood is all that it takes to spread the virus.



## Symptoms of HBV

Many individuals will have no symptoms of HBV, but for those that do, they vary widely and include:

- Muscular aches and pains
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting
- Pain or heaviness in the upper right side of the abdomen
- Fever
- Light colored stools
- Darker than normal urine
- Jaundice (yellowing of skin and the white part of the eyes)
- Itchy skin
- Weight loss



## Diagnosis

Diagnosis is based on the patient's history of exposure as well as blood tests. Liver enzyme tests as well as the hepatitis B antigen test are also used for diagnosis.

Early evaluation of HBV is very important. Medical treatment in those requiring therapy can help avoid permanent liver damage and avoid other complications. In addition to simple measures to help a patient deal with symptoms, and a lifestyle that includes good nutrition plenty of rest, patients should not use alcohol.

## Treatment

In chronic cases, medication may be prescribed to keep the virus from damaging the liver. The earlier that treatment is started, the better the chances of preventing permanent liver damage. Medical research continues to find new and more effective treatments for HBV.

If you are at high risk for HBV, you should receive a vaccine. The vaccine is also recommended for:

- All infants at birth
- Children and adolescents
- People with chronic liver disease that is not caused by HBV

**For more information on the symptoms and diagnosis of HBV, visit [gi.md](http://gi.md).**