

What do I need to know about Hepatitis B Testing and Vaccination?

Key Points

- Hepatitis B is a liver sickness caused by a virus.
- Symptoms of hepatitis B include tiredness, diarrhea, vomiting, and more.
- Prevent hepatitis B by practicing safe sex and not sharing personal products.
- If you have hepatitis B, visit your doctor every 6-12 months.



Getting tested and vaccinated for hepatitis B is important for you and your loved ones. The more you know about hepatitis B the better.

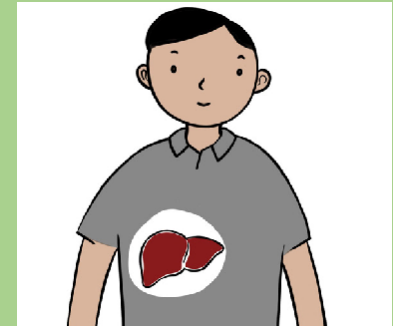


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What is hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is a liver sickness, caused by the hepatitis B virus, a germ. It can stay in the body for a long time and cause bad health problems such as liver damage and cancer, which could lead to death.



How can you get hepatitis B?



You can get hepatitis B virus when the blood or body fluids of a sick person enter your body, including through unprotected sex and sharing needles/razors.

Babies can get it during birth if the mother has this germ.

What are the symptoms of hepatitis B?

Many people with hepatitis B may not feel sick or show signs for many years. But signs MAY include:

- tiredness
- diarrhea
- vomiting
- jaundice (yellowish skin or eyes)
- pain in muscles, joints, and stomach



Even if you do not have signs, hepatitis B infection can still cause bad health problems. A blood test is needed to know if you have the illness.

Hepatitis B testing and vaccination for US-bound refugees at IOM

- IOM may have tested your blood one time before you came to the US as a refugee.
- Your doctor in the US will use that important health information to take care of you.



- If you did NOT have hepatitis B, IOM may have given you up to 3 vaccinations/shots to stop you from getting it.
- Your doctor in the US will make sure you have all the vaccinations/shots you need to prevent illness.

If you DO have hepatitis B, your doctor will:

- teach you about hepatitis B and recommend more medical checks to keep you healthy.
- recommend that all your household members and/or sexual partners also get tested for hepatitis B, and if they are negative, receive the hepatitis B vaccination/shot.
- advise that babies of pregnant women with hepatitis B get vaccinated against hepatitis B the day he or she is born.
- see you every 6 months for the rest of your life about your hepatitis B even if you feel normal.

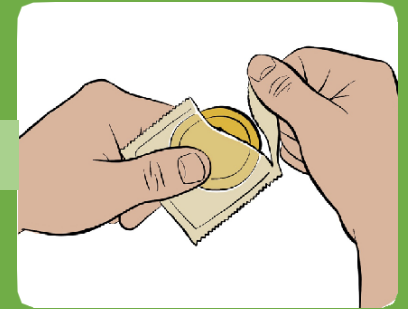
What else should I do if I have hepatitis B?

- See your doctor usually every 6-12 months to take care of the hepatitis B germ.



- Do not share toothbrushes, razors, nail clippers, tweezers, or needles/syringes.

- Always use condoms.



- Do not drink alcohol.

- If you have a cut, anybody attending to you should wear gloves.



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These materials have been adapted and approved by the Minnesota Center of Excellence in Newcomer Health.