

HEPATITIS B

What is Hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is a serious disease caused by a virus that attacks the liver. The virus, which is called Hepatitis B virus (HBV), can cause lifelong infection, cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver, liver cancer, liver failure, and death.

How do you know if you have Hepatitis B?

You may have Hepatitis B (and be spreading the disease) and not know it; sometimes a person with HBV infection has no symptoms at all. If you have symptoms

- * Your eyes or skin may turn yellow
- * You may lose your appetite
- * You may have nausea, vomiting, fever, stomach or joint pain
- * You may feel extremely tired and not be able to work for weeks or months

Who is at risk and how great is your risk for Hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B can affect anyone. Each year in the United States, more than 200,000 people of all ages get Hepatitis B. If you have had other forms of Hepatitis, you can still get Hepatitis B.

How is the Hepatitis B transmitted?

You get Hepatitis B by direct contact with blood or body fluids of an infected person; for example, you can become infected by having sex or sharing needles with an infected person. A baby can get Hepatitis B from an infected mother during childbirth. Hepatitis B is not spread through food or water or by casual contact.

Your risk is higher if you

- * Have sex with someone infected with HBV
- * Have sex with more than one partner
- * Are a man and have sex with a man
- * Live in the same house with someone who has lifelong HBV infection
- * Have a job that involves contact with human blood
- * Shoot drugs
- * Have hemophilia
- * Travel to areas where Hepatitis B is common

Your risk is also higher if your parents were born in Southeast Asia, Africa, the Amazon Basin in South America, the Pacific Islands, and the Middle East.

Who is a carrier of Hepatitis B virus?

Sometimes, people who are infected with HBV never recover fully from the infection; they carry the virus and can infect others for the rest of their lives. In the United States, about one million people carry HBV.

Is there a cure for Hepatitis B?

There is no cure for Hepatitis B; this is why **prevention** is so important. Hepatitis B vaccine is the best protection against HBV. Three doses are needed for complete protection.

Who should get vaccinated?

- * All babies, at birth
- * All children 11-12 years of age who have not been vaccinated
- * Persons of any age whose behavior puts them at high risk for HBV infection
- * Persons whose jobs expose them to human blood and body fluids

Contraindications

- * A serious allergic reaction to a prior dose of Hepatitis B vaccine or a vaccine component is a contraindication to further doses of Hepatitis B vaccine.
- * Hepatitis B vaccine contains yeast.
- * Persons allergic to yeast should not be vaccinated with vaccines containing yeast.

Where can I get the vaccination?

- * The vaccine is available in the UWF Student Health Center located in Building 63
- * You can also contact your personal physician

The vaccine is recommended for all students.