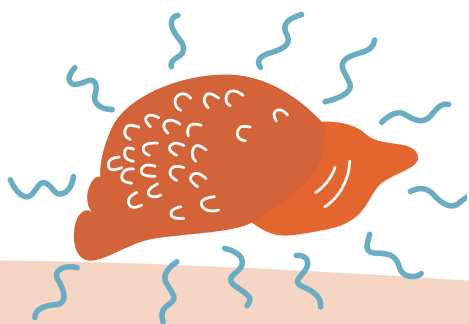


HEPATITIS B



What is it?

Hepatitis B is a viral infection that affects your liver. The liver is a body part that filters toxins from your blood. Most of the time your body is able to fight off Hepatitis B by itself. If your body can't fight off the infection you may develop chronic Hepatitis B, which means that the infection stays with you for life.



How can you get it?

The main causes of Hepatitis B are sexual contact and injection drug use. The infection is spread when your mouth, vagina, or anus comes into contact with your partner's sexual fluids. Sexual fluids include ejaculate, vaginal fluid, and anal fluid. Hepatitis B can also be spread through non-sexual activities that put you into contact with someone else's blood, such as sharing injection drug equipment, tattoo needles or piercings, toothbrushes, nail clippers, razors or medical procedures with equipment that is not cleaned properly. A mother can also pass Hepatitis B onto a child through birth.

How do you know if you have it?

Many people do not show any signs of Hepatitis B. **When you do show signs, they can include:**



Not feeling hungry



Fever



Nausea and vomiting



Headaches



Feeling very tired



Jaundice, which is when your eyes or skin take on a yellowish colour



To know for sure if you have it, you need to get tested.



Testing

Hepatitis B is tested for through a blood test. This is usually done by drawing blood from your arm. Tests for Hepatitis B are usually accurate one month after the sex act or other activity that could have exposed you to Hepatitis B.



Treatment

There is no cure for chronic Hepatitis B. However, there are medications that can help you manage the infection.



Prevention

The Hepatitis B vaccine is widely available, so you can ask your doctor or visit your local health centre. Other important ways to help prevent the spread of Hepatitis B include:

- ✓ Use barriers like condoms and dental dams during sex
- ✓ Do not share drug equipment such as needles or pipes
- ✓ Make sure you are aware of the health inspection certificates of the tattoo or piercing parlour before getting tattooed or pierced
- ✓ Make sure you see the tattoo artist or piercer open new needles and throw-out used needles
- ✓ You can also choose to engage in sexual activity that does not pose a high risk for spreading Hepatitis B such as giving or receiving a massage, mutual masturbation, or sharing a sexual fantasy
- ✓ You can also ensure that you and your partner have been tested and do not have Hepatitis B before engaging in sexual activity



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Funding for this document is provided by Indigenous Services Canada. The opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official views of Indigenous Services Canada.