

Easy B Facts

What is Hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B (HBV for short) is a virus that lives in human blood and bodily fluids (semen, vaginal secretions, etc.). HBV makes more copies of itself by infecting the liver. If you are infected with chronic hepatitis B over a long period of time HBV may damage the liver to the point that it cannot perform the important jobs that it must do to keep you healthy.

There are two stages of HBV – acute and chronic. Acute infection is when you first get the infection and generally lasts for 6 months. If you still have the hepatitis

B virus after 6 months then you have chronic HBV.

The most common ways you can get hepatitis B are from getting hepatitis B infected blood or bodily fluids into *your* body. Two of the most common ways that people get hepatitis B is during birth when the virus is passed from a mother who has chronic HBV to her baby and from having sex with someone who has HBV. Sharing needles when injecting drugs or getting stuck with a needle can also transmit HBV.

Remember.....

There are many ways to protect yourself from getting hepatitis B:

- ◆ Get vaccinated against hepatitis B
- ◆ Practice safer sex with the use of barriers during sex
- ◆ Always follow universal precautions whenever blood or bodily fluids are present

If you have chronic hepatitis B talk with your doctor to find out if you need to be treated with current HBV medicines.



HBV ADVOCATE
www.hbvadvocate.org

**Hepatitis C
Support Project**

VERSION 4 • October 2011
Alan Franciscus