

Blood Borne Viruses (BBVs)

Blood borne viruses are types of germs that live and reproduce within people's blood. **Blood borne viruses can also be found in:**

- Sexual fluids, like from the vagina, penis or anus
- Breast milk

Some people with blood borne viruses may feel well for many years before the virus affects their health, but they can still pass on the virus to other people, even if they feel well.

Blood borne viruses can be passed on to other people through blood to blood contact, and sexual contact. To reduce the risk of passing on a blood borne virus or from getting a blood borne virus, it is important to always use condoms or dams and lubricant when having any kind of sex, and to never share sharp objects like needles (from tattoos or injecting drugs) or razors, or personal hygiene items like toothbrushes.

Different blood borne viruses affect your body in different ways, the most common blood borne viruses are:

- Hepatitis B, which can cause liver damage and liver cancer
- Hepatitis C, which can cause liver damage and liver cancer
- HIV, which can make your immune system weak to other infections.

Hepatitis B and HIV are treatable, but cannot be cured. It is possible to cure most Hepatitis C infections with a course of medication. The earlier your doctor knows if you have a blood borne virus, the better your health outcomes can be. **It is therefore important to ask your doctor to test you for blood borne viruses.**