

Hepatitis B

Symptoms

Adults who get hepatitis B virus may get symptoms that are like flu, or may feel no symptoms at all.

In extreme cases hepatitis B may cause:

- Nausea and vomiting
- Pain in the liver
- Jaundice (eyes and skin look yellow)

Why you need to see a doctor if you have been at risk of Hepatitis B

Most adults who get hepatitis B will be able to clear the virus naturally (the body will fight against the virus so that it doesn't stay), but some adults will become chronically infected (the body has not been able to stop the virus in the body) with hepatitis B. Chronic hepatitis B can lead to chronic liver disease or liver cancer.

Prevention

There is a vaccination for hepatitis B, which you can get from your local doctor.

Hepatitis B can be spread through unprotected sex and blood to blood contact (usually from using tattooing, piercing or injecting equipment that is not sterile). Using condoms or dams and lubricant every time you have vaginal, anal or oral sex will reduce your risk of getting hepatitis B and other STIs. Not sharing sharp equipment like razors, or needles will also reduce your risk of getting Hepatitis B.

Testing

Some people get hepatitis B shortly after birth, as it can be passed on from mother's who have hepatitis B (who got it from their mother's and so on) and may have been living with hepatitis B their whole life without knowing. It is therefore important to get tested for hepatitis B.

Blood tests need to be taken to check for hepatitis B.

Treatment

People who have chronic hepatitis B should be monitored regularly by their doctor. If the doctor or a liver specialist suggest treatment, this is usually in the form of one tablet a day.

For more information

Talk to your doctor or local health clinic.