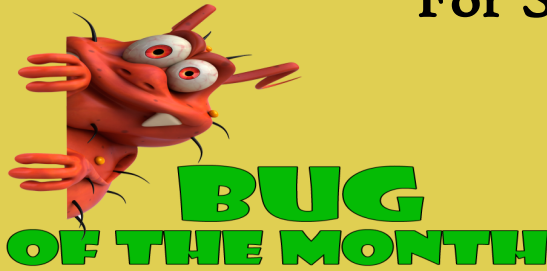


For Staff /Patient Education



Hepatitis B

November 2014

What is it?

- Hepatitis B is caused by infection with the Hepatitis B virus (HBV). It is a contagious liver disease that ranges in severity from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a serious, lifelong illness. It results from infection with the Hepatitis B virus. Hepatitis B can be either “acute” or “chronic.”
[Acute Hepatitis B virus](#) infection is a short-term illness that occurs within the first 6 months after someone is exposed to the Hepatitis B virus. Acute infection can — but does not always — lead to chronic infection.
[Chronic Hepatitis B virus](#) infection is a long-term illness that occurs when the Hepatitis B virus remains in a person's body.
- The incubation period from the time of exposure to onset of symptoms is 6 weeks to 6 months.
- Persons with chronic HBV infection might be asymptomatic, have no evidence of liver disease, or have a spectrum of disease ranging from chronic hepatitis to cirrhosis or hepatocellular carcinoma (a type of liver cancer).
- HBV can survive outside the body at least 7 days and still be capable of causing infection.

How is it spread?

- HBV is transmitted through activities that involve percutaneous (i.e., puncture through the skin) or mucosal contact with infectious blood or body fluids (e.g., semen, saliva), including:
 - Sex with an infected partner
 - Injection drug use that involves sharing needles, syringes, or drug-preparation equipment
 - Birth to an infected mother
 - Contact with blood or open sores of an infected person
 - Needle sticks or sharp instrument exposures
 - Sharing items such as razors or toothbrushes with an infected person
 - HBV is not spread through food or water, sharing eating utensils, breastfeeding, hugging, kissing, hand holding, coughing, or sneezing.

Where is it found?

- Humans: HBV is found in highest concentrations in [blood](#) and in lower concentrations in [other body fluids](#) (e.g., semen, vaginal secretions, and wound exudates).
- Hepatitis B virus can survive outside the body at least 7 days. During that time, the virus can still cause infection if it enters the body of a person who is not infected.

Prevention & Control:

- **Immunization:** The best way to prevent Hepatitis B is by getting the Hepatitis B vaccine. The Hepatitis B vaccine is safe and effective and is usually given as 3-4 shots over a 6-month period.
- Use standard precautions to prevent exposure to blood and body fluids: equipment must be cleaned and disinfected every after use (i.e. glucometer and lancing device); use proper PPEs (i.e. gloves, face protection where contact with blood or body fluids is likely); safe sharp handling (no recapping of needles) and use safety engineered medical devices where available.
- Seek medical attention (Employee Health Clinic) after a sharps exposure to initiate post exposure protocols.
- Discourage sharing of razors or toothbrushes among clients/patients/residents. Follow safer sex practices .
- Don't share needles, straws, pipes or other drug-related utensils.
- If you ever tested positive for the HBV, **DO NOT** donate blood, organs, or semen because this can put the recipient at great risk for getting hepatitis.



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Source:

CDC DVH-HBV FAQs for Health Professionals
(www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hbv/hbvfaq.htm)



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