

Hepatitis Basics

Keeping
Your Liver
Healthy



Monitoring HBV

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One of the most important things a person living with chronic hepatitis B can do is to make sure that they are monitored on a regular basis. The monitoring process involves regular medical check-ups including physical examinations, and various types of tests.

- Most likely, your doctor will want to see you every six months for the first year. During this time you will be checked to see if there are signs that the liver is damaged. There will be blood tests such as the liver panel to check certain liver chemicals as well as other types of blood tests, and tests to see how long it takes your blood to clot. The combination of all these tests will give a doctor a better idea of how the liver is functioning.
- There will be other blood tests such

as the hepatitis B virus viral load – this is the test that counts how many viruses are multiplying (replicating) in your body. Other tests will look for certain proteins your body makes called antibodies that may indicate that the body is fighting off HBV, or for a liver chemical called ALT – if these chemicals are in the blood it may mean that the liver is inflamed or becoming damaged. How often the tests are needed is based on lab test results.

- Infection with hepatitis B can lead to liver cancer so a doctor will have to order a blood test called an AFP (alpha fetoprotein) test and an image of the liver every 6 to 12 months.
 - AFP is a chemical that the body makes that may be an indication that there is cancer. However, the test is not perfect – this is

why an imaging test such as an ultrasound test is needed to look at the liver for any masses that might be cancer.

- If there are signs that the liver is damaged your doctor might want you to get a liver biopsy (see Hepatitis B Basics Fact Sheets for more information). The liver biopsy results may be a sign that treatment with HBV medications is needed.

You are the most important person involved in making sure that you stay healthy. Make sure to make and keep medical appointments and work closely with your medical team to get the best possible care and treatment.



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The information in this fact sheet is designed to help you understand and manage HBV and is not intended as medical advice. All persons with HBV should consult a medical practitioner for diagnosis and treatment of HBV.

For more information about the hepatitis B, visit the following websites.
Hepatitis B Foundation: www.hepb.org • HIVandHepatitis.com

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