

Easy B Facts

What is an HBV Genotype?

There are different strains or types of the hepatitis B virus (HBV for short) called genotypes. The HBV genotypes are labeled as letters – HBV genotype A through H. In the United States the most common genotypes are A, B, C and D. The other genotypes E through H are also found in the United States, but not as many people have them. A blood test is needed to find out what genotype you have.

Genotype information is important to know for a couple of reasons:

- Interferon and pegylated (long-acting) interferon medicines work better in people who have HBV genotypes A and B – it doesn't seem to matter what HBV genotype you have if you take antiviral HBV medications in a pill form.
- HBV genotype may play a role in how quickly or slowly the liver is damaged, but more studies are needed to confirm this theory

Remember . . .

- HBV genotype information is used to decide if you will take interferon or pegylated interferon
- There may be more damage caused by some genotypes compared to others, but this information needs to be tested more
- In most cases, doctors will only test for genotype when pegylated interferon is being considered for treatment.



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