

Easy B Facts

Chronic HBV

When you have hepatitis B, you can get a brief or short-lived infection, called “acute” hepatitis B, or you can develop a long-term infection called “chronic” infection.

Whether or not you develop chronic hepatitis B depends on your age and your health.

When babies are born to mothers infected with the hepatitis B virus (HBV), 90% of them will develop a chronic hepatitis B infection unless the baby is given the vaccine to protect it from getting chronic hepatitis B within 12 hours after being born.

When teens or adults get acute HBV, the chances of getting a chronic infection falls to about 6% (6 out of 100 people). Their immune system is strong enough to fight off the infection.

But for some people the immune system doesn’t work as well and the hepatitis B virus can keep multiplying and over time may cause damage to the liver. These people will develop chronic hepatitis B.

Remember

- To find out if you have – or have had – hepatitis B, a blood sample will be taken and analyzed for hepatitis B blood proteins called HBV antigens. They will show if you have chronic hepatitis B, or if you had acute hepatitis B in the past.
- If you test positive for an HBV protein called the surface antigen (HBsAg) for longer than six months, you have chronic or long-term hepatitis B.



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**Hepatitis C
Support Project**

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Alan Franciscus