

Hepatitis B prevention

- Take the Hepatitis B vaccine. Such vaccine involves three injections over a set time period. This vaccine is given routinely to children as part of the free national schedule
- Do not share needles, spoons or snorting practices for drug use
- Do not share shaving razors, toothbrushes or other personal belongings that involve contact with infected blood
- Always use condoms for sexual encounters
- Attend to licensed tattooing, acupuncture or body piercing parlours

Treatment for Hepatitis B

All infected persons are seen regularly by specialist physicians for physical examinations and blood testing even if no treatment is given.

Interferon therapy is one of the treatments offered to Hepatitis B infected persons. Oral treatment can also be given. Pregnancy is to be avoided whilst on treatment.

The infected persons are advised to avoid alcohol intake and encouraged to eat a healthy diet and get plenty of rest.

Hepatitis B

Available help

- Family doctor (GP)
- Genitourinary clinic (GU clinic) on **21227 981**
- Detox Helpline on **2388 5301**
- Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate on **2326 6000**

www.ehealth.gov.mt

Search for Infectious Diseases Prevention and Control Unit under the Public health drop down menu.

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Ministry for Health, the Elderly
and Community Care

Hepatitis

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Hepatitis B Infection

Hepatitis B (HBV) is a viral infection that causes inflammation of the liver. HBV is transmitted by blood and body secretions.

Acute Hepatitis: can last from a few weeks to a few months. Most people with an acute infection will fully recover and will not have any long term health problems.

Chronic Hepatitis: can last for the entire person's life. Such infection can lead to liver damage, liver failure, liver cancer and even death.

Signs and Symptoms of Hepatitis B Infection.

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal Pain
- Dark urine
- Joint pain
- Jaundice (when the whites of the eyes turn yellow, the skin becomes yellow, the urine is darker and the faeces are pale).

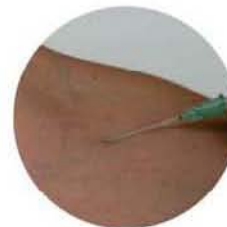
Incubation Period (the time period between exposure to the virus and when the signs and symptoms are first apparent): as early as 2 weeks but on average it is from 60 to 90 days. It may be as long as 6 to 9 months.

Diagnostic tests:

- Blood test (repeated according to incubation period)
- Liver function test
- Liver biopsy.

Hepatitis B is common amongst:

- People with injecting drug habits
- Persons having sex with multiple partners
- Men who have sex with men
- Foreigners from endemic areas
- Sex workers
- Inmates
- People with other Sexually Acquired Infections



How can you get infected with Hepatitis B?

- Sharing of used needles in drug abuse
- Having unprotected sex with an infected partner.
- Sharing shaving razors and toothbrushes of infected persons



Hepatitis B cannot be transmitted through hugging, kissing, coughing, sneezing, sharing of eating utensils or drinking glasses or breastfeeding.

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