Understanding hepatitis B
What do I need to know?
Hepatitis B (or hep B) is a serious liver disease that affects millions of people across the world. This brochure is here to help you better understand hep B and learn how to manage it.

Inside this brochure, we will explore the following topics:

- How chronic hep B affects the liver
- How hep B is spread
- Testing and vaccination
- How chronic hep B is treated

For more detailed information, visit HEPBSMART.COM™

Hep B is the world’s most common liver infection

Hep B is a serious and potentially deadly liver infection. It is caused by becoming infected with the hep B virus (HBV).
What happens if I get the hep B virus?

When someone is first infected, it is called an **ACUTE** infection.

However, if a person has had hepatitis B for more than 6 months, it’s called **CHRONIC** hepatitis B.

Most people with chronic hep B have **NO** symptoms and feel fine. However:

- They may already have liver damage
- They can still infect others

It’s important to know your hep B status because it will help you better understand how to take care of your liver health

What does my liver do?

The liver is a vital organ that you can’t live without

The liver is the largest organ inside the body, and it does the following:

- Processes what you eat and drink into energy and nutrients
- Removes harmful chemicals from your blood
- Fights off infection
- Makes substances that help digest food
How does chronic hep B affect the liver?

Chronic hep B can be causing damage without you even knowing.

Chronic hep B is sometimes called a “silent killer” because even if you don’t feel sick, it may be causing liver damage, such as:

- **Inflammation**
- **Fibrosis**
  - Scarring of the liver
- **Cirrhosis**
  - Severe scarring that may affect the way your liver functions
- **Liver Cancer**
  - Chronic hep B is a major cause of liver cancer

If left untreated, up to 1 in 4 people with chronic hep B develop liver problems such as cirrhosis and liver cancer.

If you have chronic hep B, talk to your doctor about what you can do to manage it.
The **ONLY** way to get the hep B virus is from coming into contact with infected blood or bodily fluid.

**You CAN get it from:**

- Your mother if she had hep B when you were born (most common)
- Infected blood after an injury, bite, or scratch
- Exchanging bodily fluids during sex
- Sharing unsterilized needles (including tattoo or body piercing tools)

**You can NEVER get it from:**

- Touching
- Kissing
- Drinking alcohol
- Food, water, or air
- Sharing cups and utensils

Knowing how hep B spreads can help prevent you and your family from getting infected.
Could I be at risk?

Because hep B is a common liver infection, many people are at risk

Up to 2 MILLION infected in the U.S.

- 2 out of 3 people who have hep B do not know they have it
- 240 million people infected worldwide
- Every year, an estimated 786,000 deaths are linked to chronic hep B worldwide

People born in areas shaded in red have a higher* risk of hep B infection

It’s important to understand the risk factors of chronic hep B

Some additional risk factors include:

- Being born in the U.S., not vaccinated as an infant, and having parents born in high-risk countries
- Having traveled to countries where hep B is common
- Being born to a mother who has hep B
- Coming in contact with infected body fluids (blood, semen, or vaginal secretions)
- Having unprotected sex with a person infected with hep B
- Having had a tattoo or body piercing with unsterilized tools
- Having shared unsterilized needles

Understanding these risks may help you protect yourself, family, and friends from getting hep B

*Higher risk: ≥2% of population with hep B.
A simple blood test will tell if you have chronic hep B:

1. Blood is taken from a vein in your arm.
2. It is sent to a lab and examined.

The results of your blood test will help tell your doctor if you have hep B or if you are already protected from it.

There are 3 possible types of test results:

- **At risk**
  You have never had hep B nor a vaccination. **You should get vaccinated.**

- **Infected**
  You have chronic hep B. **Ask your doctor if you need treatment.**

- **Protected**
  You had the vaccine, or you had hep B in the past and your body fought it off. **Encourage your loved ones to get tested.**

Take charge of your health and see your doctor about getting tested.
What is the hep B vaccine?

The hep B vaccine is a safe and effective way to prevent hep B infection.

The vaccine is given in a 3-shot series.

1. **Month 1**: Shot 1
2. **Month 2**: Shot 2
3. **Month 6**: Shot 3

It is important to know the facts about the hep B vaccine:

- The vaccine will **NOT** work for people who already have hep B.
- You can **NOT** get hep B from the vaccine because the vaccine does not contain the live virus.

If you do not have hep B and have not been vaccinated, talk to your doctor about getting the vaccine, and encourage your friends and family to do the same.

Remember, it is important that you get all 3 shots to protect yourself from the virus.
If I have chronic hep B, what do I do?

Even if you feel fine, you can’t ignore your hep B.

You can manage your chronic hep B with the support of your doctor, family, and friends.

Taking care of yourself can have many benefits, but it is not enough to treat chronic hep B.

Your first step is to find a doctor you trust and make regular visits so he/she can monitor your progress.

Can chronic hep B be treated?

If you are diagnosed with chronic hep B, your doctor may prescribe an antiviral medicine.

The goal of antiviral treatment is to:

- Reduce the amount of hep B virus in your body
- Reduce the risk of liver problems, such as cirrhosis, liver failure, and liver cancer

Antivirals can be either a pill or a medicine that you inject. Patients taking these medicines need to be monitored by their healthcare provider for side effects.

An important part of managing your chronic hep B is asking your doctor about potential treatment options.
What should I remember about chronic hep B?

Chronic hep B is the most common liver infection and can cause serious liver problems, such as cirrhosis and liver cancer.

The only way to get hep B is through infected blood or bodily fluids. In fact, most people with hep B got it at birth if their mother was infected.

A simple blood test can show if you have hep B or if you are protected from it.

If you have never been infected with hep B, there is a vaccine to prevent it.

If you have chronic hep B, it is important to visit your doctor regularly.

You may feel healthy but still have the disease or be at risk for liver damage.

Treatments are available that may help to reduce the amount of virus in your body and may reduce the risk of liver problems.

Gilead is committed to increasing awareness and education of hepatitis B in the community.
How do I take charge of my liver health?

Know your hep B status
Get tested and talk to your family and friends about getting screened

If you DO NOT have hep B
Talk to your doctor about getting the vaccine and encourage your loved ones to do the same

If you DO have hep B
There are treatments available that may reduce the risk of serious liver damage. Visit your doctor regularly and ask about potential treatment options

Learning more about hep B is an important part of taking charge of your liver health.

For more information, visit HEPBSMART.COM™