

If you need help finding a doctor or want more information, please call the HBV Information and Assistance HelpLine at **1-888-888-0981**. This is a free telephone call, which is part of a national community program sponsored by GlaxoSmithKline. All information is available in English, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, and Vietnamese. If you speak English, please contact the Hepatitis B Foundation at 215-489-4900 or email us at info@hepb.org.

HEPATITIS B TREATMENTS

Is there a cure for chronic hepatitis B?

The good news is that there are promising new treatment for people living with chronic hepatitis B. Today, there are several approved drugs in the United States that can slow down liver damage caused by the virus.

The new drugs can help slow the progression of liver disease in chronically infected people by slowing down the virus. If there is less hepatitis B virus being produced, then there is less damage being done to the liver. Sometimes these drugs can even get rid of the virus. With all of the new exciting research, there is great hope that a complete cure will be found for chronic hepatitis B in the near future.

Are there any approved drugs to treat chronic hepatitis B?

Currently, there are several approved drugs in the United States for people who have chronic hepatitis B infections.

Approved Hepatitis B Drugs in the United States

Interferon-alpha (Intron A) is given by injection several times a week for six months to a year, or sometimes longer. The drug can cause side effects such as flu-like symptoms, depression, and headaches. Approved in 1991 and available for both children and adults.

Lamivudine (Epivir-HBV, Zeffix, or Heptodin) is a pill that is taken once a day, with almost no side effects, for at least one year or longer. A primary concern is the possible development of hepatitis B virus mutants during and after treatment. Approved in 1998 and available for both children and adults.

Adefovir dipivoxil (Hepsera) is a pill taken once a day, with few side effects, for at least one year or longer. The primary concern is that kidney problems can occur while taking the drug. Approved September 2002 and available only for adults. Pediatric clinical trials are being planned scheduled.

It is important to know, not every chronic hepatitis B patient needs to be on medication. Some patients only need to be monitored by their doctor on a regular basis (at least once a year, or more). Other patients with active signs of liver disease may benefit the most from treatment. Be sure to talk to your doctor about whether you could benefit from treatment and discuss the treatment options.

It is vital that all people with chronic hepatitis B visit their doctor on a regular basis, whether they receive treatment or not!

There are additional promising new drugs being tested and developed for chronic hepatitis B. Please visit the Hepatitis B Foundation's [Drug Watch](#) chart to find out more about new potential treatments. This chart is available only in English since the information changes so frequently.

Are there any other new drugs for chronic hepatitis B?

There are several promising new drugs for hepatitis B in the experimental stage. Some are still being tested in the laboratory. Other drugs are being tested in small groups of people - these tests are called "clinical trials". People volunteer to participate in clinical trials and doctors carefully select their patients to test new drugs. They keep close track of the patients while they are taking the drug. The goal is to make sure the drug is safe and that it works. Clinical trials can take many years to be completed and they must be done before any new drug can be approved for general use.

Visit the Hepatitis B Foundation's Drug Watch

The Hepatitis B Foundation maintains a list of both approved drugs and promising new treatments for chronic hepatitis B on its website. We keep track of drugs that are in the research phase and also in clinical trials. This chart is written in English only because the information changes so frequently. Please visit our [Drug Watch](#) page often for regular updates.

Where can I get more information about testing and treatment?

You can ask your family doctor, the local health department, or community health clinic to order the simple hepatitis B blood test. You can also start the vaccine series at this time.

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