

## ***Children & Hepatitis B***

How will being diagnosed with chronic hepatitis B affect my child?

I am planning to adopt a child, should I request that he or she be tested?

What if the child I'm planning to adopt tests positive for hepatitis B?

How can I protect other family members if my child tests positive for hepatitis B?

Is there treatment available for a child with chronic hepatitis B?

### **How will being diagnosed with chronic hepatitis B affect my child?**

Hepatitis B does not usually affect a child's normal growth and development. Most children with chronic hepatitis B infections will enjoy long and healthy lives. Unlike other chronic medical conditions, there are generally no physical disabilities associated with hepatitis B, nor are there usually any physical restrictions for these children.

### **I am planning to adopt a child, should I request that he or she be tested?**

Your adoption agency should be able to tell you if a child has been tested for hepatitis B. With an international adoption, it is advised that you do not request that your child be tested in the originating country since the blood test itself could be a source of infection.

### **What if the child I am planning to adopt tests positive for hepatitis B?**

Finding out that the child you wish to adopt has chronic hepatitis B can be upsetting, but should not be cause for alarm or stopping an adoption. We hope that a hepatitis B diagnosis will not change your decision to adopt a child. You can be reassured that most children will enjoy a long and healthy life. Hepatitis B does not usually affect a child's normal growth and development, and there are generally no physical disabilities or restrictions associated with this diagnosis.

### **How can I protect other family members if my child tests positive for hepatitis B?**

All parents, siblings, and other household members should be vaccinated. Extended family members, childcare providers, family, friends, and others

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should consider vaccination if they have frequent and close contact with your child.

**Is there treatment available for a child with hepatitis B?**

There are currently two approved treatment options available in the United States for children with chronic hepatitis B: (1) Intron A (interferon alpha) and (2) Epivir-HBV (lamivudine). However, not every child (or adult) with hepatitis B needs to be treated. You should see a pediatric liver specialist to determine if your child would benefit from one of these approved treatments. Whether you decide to start treatment or not, your child should see a liver specialist or doctor skilled in hepatitis B on a regular basis.