

If I have a chronic hepatitis B infection, should I be on medication?

It is important to understand that not every person with chronic hepatitis B needs to be on medication. You should talk to your doctor about whether you are a good candidate for drug therapy or a clinical trial. Be sure that you understand the pros and cons of each treatment option. Whether you decide to start treatment or not, you should be seen regularly by a liver specialist or a doctor knowledgeable about hepatitis B.

What advice do you have for those living with chronic hepatitis B?

We strongly recommend avoiding alcohol, as it can be extremely harmful to a liver already infected with the hepatitis B virus. Additionally, you should avoid smoking for the same reason. You should be sure to talk to your doctor before taking any prescription, over the counter medication, or herbal remedies.

Although there is no special diet for people who have chronic hepatitis B, a healthy, well-balanced diet that is low fat and includes plenty of vegetables is recommended. You may want to avoid eating raw shellfish, since they can contain bacteria that are harmful to your liver.

Can I donate blood if I have hepatitis B?

No. The blood bank will not accept any blood that has been exposed to hepatitis B, even if you have recovered from an acute infection.

Pregnancy & Hepatitis B

Should I be tested for hepatitis B if I am pregnant?

Why are hepatitis B tests so important for pregnant women?

Will a hepatitis B infection affect my pregnancy?

If I am pregnant and have hepatitis B, how can I protect my baby?

Can I breastfeed my baby if I have hepatitis B?

Should I be tested for hepatitis B if I am pregnant?

Yes. ALL pregnant women should be tested for hepatitis B! Testing is especially important for women who fall into high-risk groups such as health care workers, women from ethnic communities where hepatitis B is common, spouses or partners living with an infected person, etc. If you are

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pregnant, be sure your doctor tests you for hepatitis B before your baby is born.

Why are these tests so important for pregnant women?

If you test positive for hepatitis B and are pregnant, the virus can be passed on to your newborn baby during delivery. If your doctor is aware that you have hepatitis B, he or she can make arrangements to have the proper medications in the delivery room to prevent your baby from being infected.

If the proper procedures are not followed, your baby has a 95% chance of developing chronic hepatitis B!

Will a hepatitis B infection affect my pregnancy?

A hepatitis B infection should not cause any problems for you or your unborn baby during your pregnancy. It is important for your doctor to be aware of your hepatitis B infection so that he or she can monitor your health and so your baby can be protected from an infection after it is born.

If I am pregnant and have hepatitis B, how can I protect my baby?

If you test positive for hepatitis B, then your newborn must be given two shots immediately in the delivery room:

- First dose of the **hepatitis B vaccine**
- One dose of the **Hepatitis B Immune Globulin (HBIG)**.

If these two medications are given correctly within the first 12 hours of life, a newborn has more than a 90% chance of being protected against a lifelong hepatitis B infection. You must make sure your baby receives the second and third dose of the hepatitis B vaccine at one and six months of age to ensure complete protection.

There is no second chance to protect your newborn baby!

Can I breastfeed my baby if I have hepatitis B?

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that all women with hepatitis B should be encouraged to breastfeed their newborns. Read the [Full Report](#).

The benefits of breastfeeding outweigh the potential risk of infection, which is minimal. In addition, since it is recommended that all infants be vaccinated against hepatitis B at birth, any potential risk is further reduced.