

Are there any drugs in the experimental stage 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 must be done before any new drug can be approved for general use and they can take many years to be completed.

Visit the Hepatitis B Foundation's Drug Watch

There are 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 approved and experimental treatments. This chart is available only in English at this time.

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.

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 Vietnamese, English, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean.

If you speak English, please contact the Hepatitis B Foundation by email at info@hepb.org or call us at 215-489-4900.

PREGNANT WOMEN AND 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 Asian women who are at high risk for having a hepatitis B infection. Be sure to ask your doctor for this simple blood test as soon as possible.

If I am pregnant, should I be vaccinated?

Talk to your doctor about the hepatitis B vaccine once you get your blood test results. If your blood tests show that you do not have hepatitis B, then the doctor may recommend waiting until after the baby is born. If your husband or sexual partner has hepatitis B, if you live in close contact with a family member who has hepatitis B, or you have a job that places you at high risk for infection, then the doctor may recommend that you start the vaccine series right away. This is a decision you must discuss with your doctor.

Will a hepatitis B infection affect my pregnancy?

Hepatitis B does not usually affect the health of your unborn baby and most pregnant women with hepatitis B do not have any problems. But, it is important for the doctor to know whether you have a hepatitis B infection so they can watch you closely throughout your pregnancy.

How can I infect my newborn baby if I have hepatitis B?

You can pass the hepatitis B virus to your newborn baby during delivery. It is thought that when a woman goes into labor, there is a large exchange of blood between the mother and newborn. Generally, you cannot prevent infecting your newborn by choosing to have surgery (or a C-section). The hepatitis B virus is passed whether you give birth naturally or through surgery.

Why should I worry about my newborn becoming infected with hepatitis B?

90% of all newborns who are exposed to hepatitis B at birth will become chronically infected. This means the virus can stay in their blood and liver for possibly a lifetime. They can pass the virus on to others. They will also live with a greater chance of developing serious liver disease or liver cancer later in life.

If I have hepatitis B, how can I protect my newborn?

The good news is that there is a safe vaccine to protect your newborn baby. It is most important that your newborn receive the first dose of the hepatitis B vaccine in the delivery room. If possible, ask your doctor to order the hepatitis B immune globulin (HBIG), which is another medication that helps the vaccine to work even more successfully. If the HBIG is not available, don't worry. The most important medication for your newborn is the hepatitis B vaccine.

1. **Make sure the doctor has the hepatitis B vaccine and one dose of hepatitis B immune globulin (HBIG) available before your baby is born.**
2. **Tell your doctor that you want the first dose of hepatitis B vaccine and HBIG to be given to your baby in the delivery room.** This request is to make certain the doctor or nurse doesn't forget to give your new baby the two drugs immediately after birth. Ask your partner or husband to make sure that these drugs are given since you may be too tired to pay attention to this very important detail.
3. **Be sure your baby completes the hepatitis B vaccine series by receiving the last two doses at 1 and 6 months of age.**

Why should my baby be vaccinated in the delivery room?

TO PROTECT YOUR BABY FROM A CHRONIC INFECTION, THE VACCINE MUST BE GIVEN WITHIN THE FIRST 12 HOURS OF LIFE. This is a very small window of opportunity. If the vaccine is given within the first 12 hours of life, your baby has a greater than 95% chance of being protected from a chronic hepatitis B infection. If the vaccine is not given correctly or too late, then your baby will most likely become chronically infected with hepatitis B. You don't have a second chance to protect your baby!

Where can I get more information about testing and vaccinations?

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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