

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 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.