

# HEPATITIS B

## WHAT PARENTS SHOULD KNOW



### What is hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is a viral infection of the liver. It can lead to serious liver disease, cirrhosis (scarring) and **liver cancer**.



If children are infected early in life, they have a **90% chance** of developing a chronic (lifelong) hepatitis B infection.



The virus can live on surfaces for as long as a week.



### Protect Your Child For Life With the First Anti-cancer Vaccine

#### Did you know?

Hepatitis B is the world's leading cause of **liver cancer** - but it can be prevented.

The hepatitis B vaccine is the world's 1<sup>st</sup> anti-cancer vaccine.



It can keep your child protected from both **hepatitis B** and liver cancer in the future.

### How is it transmitted?

Without vaccination, anyone can get hepatitis B, including **babies and children**.

The virus is transmitted through direct contact with infected blood. For an infection to occur, infected blood must enter the bloodstream of someone who is not infected. Hepatitis B can be sexually transmitted, but other common routes of transmission can be scratches, cuts, and open wounds from everyday activities.

Mother-to-child transmission of hepatitis B at birth is the most common method of transmission. Caregivers and other children may be living with hepatitis B without knowing it. Simple activities, like using shared items that can carry dried blood too small to be seen, such as nail clippers, can expose your child to infected blood and lead to a lifelong infection.

The hepatitis B vaccine gives your child's immune system a strong start, helping them stay healthy so they can focus on what matters most - growing, playing, discovering, and reaching their potential.

When your child completes all three doses of the vaccine series, they gain the full, lifelong protection that helps them thrive.

You can keep your child healthy at **no cost** - the hepatitis B vaccine is fully covered through Medicaid, CHIP, VFC, and most health insurance plans.

*Talk with your child's pediatrician to learn more about insurance or the vaccine schedule.*

#### References:

1. U.S. CDC. (2025). Clinical Overview of Hepatitis B. Retrieved 11/4, 2025, from <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis-b/hcp/clinical-overview/>.
2. Hepatitis B Virus: A Comprehensive Strategy for Eliminating Transmission in the United States Through Universal Childhood Vaccination: Recommendations of the Immunization Practices Advisory Committee (ACIP). Nov. 2 1991. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Accessed Nov 4, 2025
3. McIntosh, E. D. G., & Bek, M. D. (1997). Horizontal transmission of hepatitis B in a children's day-care centre: a preventable event. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, 21(7), 791-792.



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