

# Hepatitis B and Community Health

As a community health worker, you're in a unique position to act as a health guide and trusted source of health information for community members. You can help protect your community by informing people about the risks and protection strategies for hepatitis B.

Take pride in empowering community members to take control of their health!

Here's information about hepatitis B that you can share with members of your community:

- What is hepatitis B?** Hepatitis B is a common virus that can either be acute (lasting less than 6 months) or chronic (lasting a lifetime). Most people get it as babies or children.
- What are the effects of chronic hepatitis B?** Chronic hepatitis B negatively affects the liver, causing liver disease and cancer over time. Often, symptoms take years to appear, so getting tested even without symptoms is important.
- Is there a cure for hepatitis B?** Currently, there is no cure. However, hepatitis B can be managed and individuals living with the virus can live long and healthy lives. There is also a safe and effective hepatitis B vaccine available.
- How is hepatitis B spread?** Hepatitis B is spread in a few ways: Direct blood contact, mother to child during childbirth, sharing household hygiene items (razors, toothbrushes, etc.), sharing needles, healthcare exposure, unprotected sex, tattoos, piercings, barbers, and circumcision
- Can hepatitis B be shared through casual contact?** Hepatitis B is NOT spread through: Sharing food, sharing water (a cup or toilet), coughing or sneezing, breastfeeding, holding hands, or hugging and kissing
- How can community members protect themselves from hepatitis B?** Community members should get tested for hepatitis B and follow their doctor's recommendations if they have the virus. For those without hepatitis B, vaccination, practicing safe sex, never touching blood without gloves, and never sharing household hygiene items or needles are good practices for reducing the risk of hepatitis B.

There is stigma around hepatitis B and spreading accurate information is vital.

You have the power to fight the stigma and save lives!

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