

Protecting Your Baby From Hepatitis B

What Pregnant Women Need to Know



Hepatitis (HEP-ah-TY-tis) B is a serious liver disease caused by infection by the hepatitis B virus. If not cared for or treated, a hepatitis B infection can lead to cirrhosis (liver scarring), liver damage, and liver cancer.

Hepatitis B is called the “silent killer” because most people with the disease do not know they have it until they develop serious problems. People with hepatitis B can spread the virus to others even if they do not have any symptoms.

Why should I be concerned about hepatitis B?

Asians are at high risk of getting infected. About 75% of people with chronic hepatitis B infection in the world are Asian.

Among Asians, the most common way the virus spreads is from mother to baby. If a mother has hepatitis B, her blood and body fluids are likely to infect her baby during birth.

Even if a mother does not have hepatitis B, her child can still get infected by:

- Contact with infected blood and body fluids through breaks in the skin, such as bites, cuts, or sores.
- Contact with objects that have blood or body fluids on them such as toothbrushes or razors.
- Having sex without a condom with someone who has hepatitis B when the child grows up.

Hepatitis B virus is NOT spread by:

- Sharing food or drinks
- Sharing eating utensils or cups
- Sneezing or coughing
- Kissing or hugging
- Saliva, sweat, tears, urine, or stool



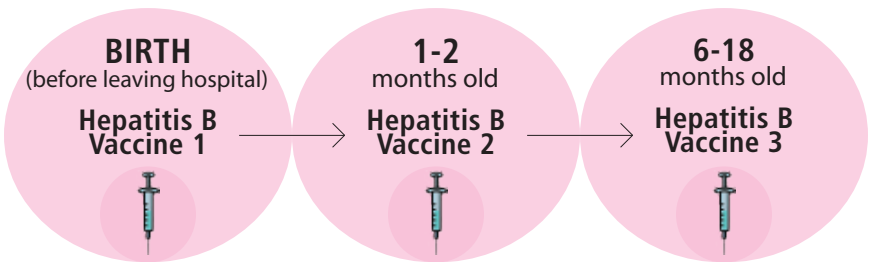
Are you pregnant? Get tested for hepatitis B!

Get tested for hepatitis B whether or not this is your first pregnancy. You can get the test during your prenatal check-ups.

If your test results show that you are NOT infected, ask your doctor if you need the hepatitis B vaccine. The vaccine can protect you against hepatitis B for life.

Hepatitis B vaccine is safe and effective.

The vaccine can protect you and your baby against hepatitis B for life. If you do not have hepatitis B, your baby should get three shots of the hepatitis B vaccine beginning at birth.



If you have hepatitis B, you may need further testing. Your doctor will let you know if you need to be treated and how you can take care of yourself. Be sure to take any medicine your doctor prescribes. Do not take any herbal products or medicine without telling your doctor. They may damage your liver. See your doctor regularly about your hepatitis B condition even if you feel fine.

Tell your family and loved ones about your liver infection. Encourage them to get tested and vaccinated. Hepatitis B can be prevented and treated.

Take these steps to protect yourself and your loved ones:

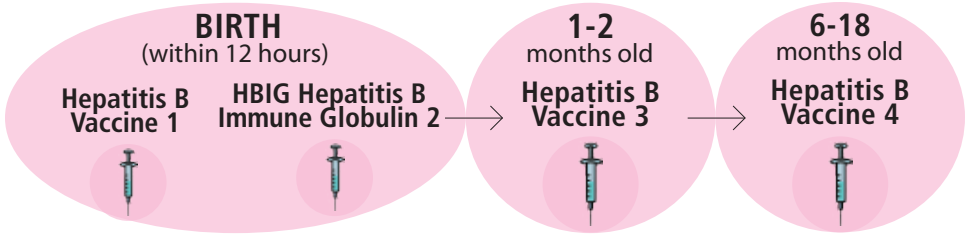
- Use condoms when you have sex.
- Do not use drugs (share needles)
- Do not share personal items like toothbrushes or razors that might have blood on them.



Even if you have hepatitis B, You can have a healthy baby!

If you have hepatitis B, your baby needs an extra shot called Hepatitis B Immune Globulin (HBIG) to protect him or her against the infection. There should be a total of 4 shots by the time your baby is 6 months old. Your baby will have more than a 95% chance of being free of hepatitis B.

Remember, your baby needs to get the HBIG shot and the first vaccine shot within 12 hours after being born.



Follow these steps to protect your baby against hepatitis B:

- Tell your doctor and the hospital that you have hepatitis B before you give birth.
- Make sure your baby gets the two shots within 12 hours after birth.
- Tell the doctor who will care for your baby that you have hepatitis B.
- Be sure that your baby gets another two shots by the age of 6 months.
- Make sure your baby has a blood test between the ages of 9 months and 18 months to see if he or she has been protected.

It is safe to breastfeed your baby!

If your baby gets the HBIG shot and hepatitis B vaccine within 12 hours of birth, it is safe to breastfeed right away. Take good care of your nipples to avoid cracking and bleeding. Ask your doctor if you should still breastfeed if you have cracked nipples or open sores on your breast.

Last, don't forget to see your doctor regularly about your hepatitis B condition. Take medicine as prescribed by your doctor. Do not take any herbal products or medicine without telling your doctor. They may damage your liver.



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