

Living with Hepatitis B virus infection

Department of Infectious Diseases

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Information for Patients

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Introduction

- The word “hepatitis” means swelling (inflammation) of the liver. Hepatitis B virus is an infection which can cause hepatitis
- The virus is carried in the blood and other body fluids. You cannot usually tell how and when a person got it as people do not always feel unwell. We can tell if you have hepatitis B by doing a blood test
- Hepatitis B is a very common infection in certain parts of the world such as South-East Asia, India, Africa, the Middle and Far East and some parts of Europe

How did I get hepatitis B

- Mother to child transmission or transmission from family in very early life
- Through unsafe medical practices such as unsterilised medical equipment outside the UK
- Through close sexual contact with someone who has the virus
- Through unsafe blood transfusions outside the UK
- Through unsterilised tattoo or piercing equipment
- Through shared injecting drug equipment
- Hepatitis B **cannot** be caught from hugging, kissing, sharing cups or cutlery or by using the same toilet with someone who has the infection

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

What does hepatitis B do to your body?

- Hepatitis B virus can be in the body without causing any damage or making you feel unwell but it can damage your liver over time
- In some people, hepatitis B can cause the liver to be swollen or become permanently damaged and scarred. Severe scarring is called cirrhosis which can stop your liver working properly and could, in some cases, lead to cancer of the liver

What treatment is available?

- There are several different treatments for hepatitis B. Your doctor will do blood tests and a scan of your liver (called a fibroscan) to decide if you need to start treatment
- You will be offered treatment if the amount of hepatitis B virus in your blood is high or you already have liver damage
- Some people only have a small amount of virus in their blood so they will not have treatment straight away but will be kept under review

What happens once I have been diagnosed?

- You will be referred to a specialist doctor in the hospital who will see you regularly. **It is very important that you attend your appointments**
- You should not share razor blades or toothbrushes and should inform your GP and your dentist
- Your family and contacts can be protected against hepatitis B by a very effective vaccination

Where can I get more information?

- From your GP or specialist hospital doctor
- From the specialist Liver nurses on 0116 258 6679 (Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm)
- From the British Liver Trust at www.britishlivertrust.org.uk

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
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Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

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