



CANCER ALLIANCE OF TEXAS
**HEPATITIS B AND C
AND LIVER CANCER**



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Texas Department of State
Health Services

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What is Hepatitis?

Hepatitis is inflammation of the liver. Hepatitis can be caused by heavy alcohol use, toxins, some medications, and certain medical conditions. Most often, hepatitis is caused by a virus. Hepatitis B and C are two of the most common types of viral hepatitis.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that more than three million people are living with hepatitis B or C in the U.S.^{1,2} Many of them don't know they've been infected, because they don't look or feel sick.

Hepatitis B and C virus infections

Hepatitis B and C virus infections can be short-term illnesses for some people and become long-term illnesses for others. These viral infections are considered a serious health risk because they can spread easily from person to person and cause liver failure, cancer, and death. People living with a long-term hepatitis B or C virus infection have a high risk of liver cancer. Twenty-four percent of liver cancer cases are caused by hepatitis C; 7% percent are caused by hepatitis B.³

You can reduce your risk of getting liver cancer caused by hepatitis B and C by:

- Getting vaccinated against hepatitis B
- Getting tested for hepatitis B and C
- Receiving treatment for hepatitis B and C, if diagnosed

Hepatitis B vaccine and testing

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the CDC recommend the hepatitis B vaccine for infants at birth, anyone younger than age 19 who has not received the vaccine, and adults who may be at increased risk.¹ Hepatitis B testing is also available and recommended for certain groups of people.

Hepatitis C testing

While there is no vaccine for hepatitis C, the CDC recommends one-time testing for all U.S. adults and pregnant persons during every pregnancy.² Persons at increased risk may be tested regularly.

What You Need to Know about Hepatitis B and C

Hepatitis B is spread when blood, semen, or other body fluids from a person infected with the virus enters the body of someone who is not infected. This can happen through:

- Sexual contact
- Childbirth
- Direct contact with blood
- Sharing personal items or drug-injection equipment

Hepatitis C is usually spread when someone comes into contact with blood from an infected person. Hepatitis C can spread in the same ways as hepatitis B. Before 1992, when the blood supply of donors was not screened for hepatitis C, the virus was also spread through blood transfusions and organ transplants.

Some people infected with hepatitis B or C may be able to clear the virus without treatment. Others may receive treatment and live with the virus for the rest of their lives.

Not all people infected with hepatitis B or C have symptoms. Testing is available to diagnose hepatitis B and C infections. Talk to your doctor to see if you should get tested.

Symptoms of hepatitis B and C can include:

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea and vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Dark urine
- Clay-colored or light-colored bowel movements
- Joint pain
- Yellow color in the skin or the eyes

Your Amazing Liver

Your liver is located behind your ribs, on the upper right side of your body. It removes toxins from your body's blood supply, maintains healthy blood sugar levels, regulates blood clotting, and performs hundreds of other vital functions.

Inflammation or damage caused by conditions like hepatitis B and C virus infections can affect liver function. These viruses can also cause life-threatening health problems like liver scarring and cancer.

Talk to Your Doctor about Getting Tested For Hepatitis B and C

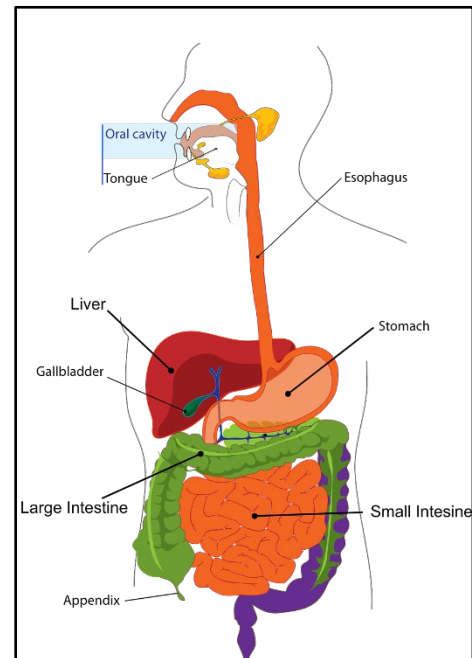
The CDC recommends testing for hepatitis B and C for many people.

Hepatitis B testing is recommended for:

- People born in certain countries where hepatitis B is common
- People who were not vaccinated as infants whose parents are from countries with high rates of hepatitis B
- Infants born to mothers who have a hepatitis B virus infection
- Household or sexual contacts of people with hepatitis B
- Men who have sex with men
- People who inject drugs
- People with conditions such as:
 - Hepatitis C
 - Elevated alanine aminotransferase (ALT) levels
 - Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)
 - End-stage renal disease (including hemodialysis patients)
- People requiring immunosuppressive therapy such as chemotherapy
- Persons who are pregnant

Hepatitis C testing is recommended for:

- People age 18 and older, at least once in their lifetime



- Persons who are pregnant, during every pregnancy
- Infants born to mothers who have a hepatitis C infection
- People who inject drugs or have ever injected drugs
- People who have been exposed to blood from a person who has hepatitis C
- People who have abnormal liver tests or are living with liver disease
- People with conditions such as HIV or end-stage renal disease (including hemodialysis patients)
- People who received donated blood or organs before July 1992
- People who received clotting factor concentrates before 1987

How Can You Protect Yourself from Hepatitis B and C?

Get vaccinated against hepatitis B

The best way to prevent hepatitis B is to get vaccinated. Talk to your doctor or local health department about getting the hepatitis B vaccine.

The ACIP and the CDC recommend the hepatitis B vaccine for:

- Infants at birth
- Anyone younger than age 19 who has not been vaccinated
- People from countries where hepatitis B is common
- People at risk for infection through sexual contact or blood exposure
- People who are in jail or prison
- People with hepatitis C, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), or chronic liver disease
- All people seeking protection from the hepatitis B virus

Get tested for hepatitis B and C

Testing is available for hepatitis B and C.

- Hepatitis B testing is recommended for people who are at high risk of being exposed to the virus.
- Hepatitis C testing is recommended for:
 - All adults, at least once in their lifetime
 - Persons who are pregnant during every pregnancy

Receive treatment for hepatitis B and C, if diagnosed

For some people, hepatitis B and C virus infections can be short-term illnesses. For others, these virus infections can become a long-term illness that can lead to liver scarring, damage, cancer, and death.

If you have a positive test, talk to your doctor about next steps. Your doctor can tell you about treatment options, whether you need to see a liver or infectious disease specialist, and what else you can do to take care of your liver.

References:

¹What is hepatitis B - FAQ. CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hbv/bfaq.htm>. Published July 28, 2020. Accessed January 2022.

²What is hepatitis C - FAQ. CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hcv/cfaq.htm>. Published July 28, 2020. Accessed January 2022.

³Liver and intrahepatic bile duct cancer in Texas. <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/tcr/data/cancersites/Liver-Cancer-in-Texas-Web-Report.pdf>. Accessed January 2022.

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