

## **WHAT TO EXPECT WHILE IN HOSPITAL:**

- Staff will follow routine practices.
- Staff will wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when handling any blood or body fluids.
- You will not be required to stay in your room because of your infection with Hepatitis B.

## **WHAT FAMILY AND FRIENDS SHOULD DO WHEN VISITING**

- Clean their hands before entering and when leaving the room.

**HAND HYGIENE  
THE BEST  
WAY TO PREVENT  
INFECTION**



Special care must be paid to hand hygiene as it is the best way to prevent the spread of germs.

### **GOOD HAND HYGIENE INCLUDES:**

#### **Alcohol-Based Hand Rub**

1. Apply to palm of one hand.
2. Rub hands together, covering all of hands and fingers.
3. Rub until hands feel dry.

#### **Hand Washing**

1. Remove all jewelry.
2. Use warm running water and soap.
3. Spend at least **15-30** seconds lathering and washing hands.
4. Rub hands together, paying attention to fingertips, between the fingers, and thumbs.
5. Rinse thoroughly.
6. Dry with paper towel and turn off tap with paper towel.
7. Dispose of paper towel in the garbage.

**IT'S OK TO ASK NURSES, DOCTORS,  
AND OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS  
IF THEY HAVE CLEANED THEIR HANDS.**

**REMIND VISITORS TO  
CLEAN THEIR HANDS.**

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## **HEPATITIS B**

**Information for Clients,  
Residents, Families, and  
Visitors**

**INFECTION PREVENTION  
& CONTROL PROGRAM**  
[www.easternhealth.ca](http://www.easternhealth.ca)



## **WHAT IS HEPATITIS B (HEP B)?**

- Hepatitis B is an infection of the liver caused by the Hepatitis B Virus (HBV).
- This virus is found in the blood; it is contagious, but can be prevented by a vaccine.
- This is a reportable infection in Canada.

## **HOW IS THE VIRUS SPREAD?**

- Hepatitis B is highly infectious. It is found in the blood and body fluids (semen, vaginal fluid, and saliva) of infected individuals.
- It is most commonly spread through unprotected sex, sharing contaminated needles or other drug supplies, sharing of personal items such as razors, contaminated tattoo ink and piercing needles, or from an infected mother to the newborn at birth.
- An individual may have acute Hep B or be a chronic carrier of Hep B.

## **WHO CAN GET HEP B ?**

**Although anyone can get Hep B some individuals are at greater risk than others:**

- IV drug users who share needles or other drug supplies.
- Individuals with multiple sexual partners or who are sexually active with an individual who is Hep B positive (either acute or chronic).
- Those infected with HIV, Hep C, or a previous sexually transmitted infection.
- Health care workers due to a needle stick injury.

## **WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF HEP B DISEASE?**

After the virus enters the body it can take 2-6 months to develop signs of the illness. Signs and symptoms include, but are not limited to:

- Jaundice (yellowing of skin and eyes).
- Fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea.
- Dark urine, pale stools, joint pain, or pain in the stomach area.
- About half of the individuals infected will not have any symptoms that is why it is important to take precautions.

## **HOW CAN YOU PREVENT HEP B?**

- There is a safe and effective vaccine available in Canada. It is the best way to prevent the disease.
- Immunization programs in Canada are free for children and certain groups of adults.
- If pregnant, you should know your status to decrease the risk of transmission during birth.
- Do not share needles or other drug supplies.
- Do not share personal items such as razors, nail clippers, or toothbrushes.
- Practice safe sex.
- Take appropriate precautions when in contact with blood or other bodily fluids that may contain the virus.
- Be careful when travelling because Hep B can be widespread in other countries.

## **WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ACUTE HEP B AND A CHRONIC CARRIER?**

### **Acute Hep B infection:**

- Symptoms may be non-specific or may not even occur.
- Occurs when you have been exposed to the virus.
- 90% of individuals will clear the virus on their own within 6 months of being infected and will have developed lifelong protection.

### **Chronic Hep B infection:**

- 10% infected with HBV will become chronic carriers of Hep B.
- They may not show signs and symptoms of infection but still pose a risk for transmission.
- They are also at increased risk of developing serious health complications such as scarring of the liver (cirrhosis) or liver cancer, if left untreated.
- Not everyone with chronic Hep B will need treatment, this decision is made in consultation with your physician.
- If treatment is started then you will require close monitoring by your health care provider.