



**YOUR
HEALTH.
YOUR
CHOICE.**

Hepatitis B

Talk to your partner(s) about sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and your health before you have sex. You can pass on an STI without knowing you have one. During sex, you can use latex condoms to lower your chances of getting STIs.

What is Hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is a virus. It can cause a serious infection of the liver. It is a reportable infection, meaning that if you test positive for Hepatitis B, you may be contacted by a clinic or health department to get contact information for current and past sexual partners for notification and testing purposes. Your name is not disclosed when a current or past sexual partner is notified.

How do you get Hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is very contagious. You can get it from body contact with body fluids – blood, semen, urine, vaginal fluids and saliva. The virus can be passed on through vaginal sex, oral sex, or anal sex with a person who has the infection. Sharing personal items, like toothbrushes and razors, or by sharing needles or tattoo equipment, can also pass on Hepatitis B. A pregnant woman can pass Hepatitis B on to her baby before it is born. Hepatitis B is not spread through food or water or by casual contact.

How can you tell if you have Hepatitis B?

Almost half of the people who have Hepatitis B don't even know that they have it. They can still pass the virus on without knowing it.

If you have Hepatitis B, you might notice

- * You feel tired.
- * You have pain in your abdomen.
- * Your urine or stool is a strange color.
- * Your skin is yellow.
- * You are not very hungry.
- * You feel like throwing up.

It is important to use condoms or a latex barrier with sexual partners to decrease the risk of getting a sexually transmitted infection.

What does the term “Hepatitis B carrier” mean?

Hepatitis B carriers are people who will carry the virus with them for the rest of their life and can pass it on to others.

How do you get tested for Hepatitis B?

A blood test can confirm whether or not you have Hepatitis B.

Do you need a follow-up test?

Yes. If you have Hepatitis B, the clinician will give you another blood test to see if you are still able to pass the infection on to other people.

Is there a cure for Hepatitis B?

There is no cure for Hepatitis B. There are medications available to treat chronic (life-long) Hepatitis B infection.

You can protect yourself against Hepatitis B. There is a vaccine that protects you. You can get the vaccination for free at The House. It is given by needle. It takes three needles and several months before you are protected. If you are at risk for getting Hepatitis B, you and your partner(s) should ask a clinician for these needles.

If you need further information or would like to book an appointment, call:

Planned Parenthood Toronto Health Services for youth ages 13 to 29. 416-927-7171. Health Services offers same-day, scheduled and drop-in appointments. For more information visit www.ppt.on.ca.

Women’s Programming at the Bay Centre for Birth Control for women of all ages at 416-351-3700.

Youth can also access information about sexual health by calling the Teen Sex InfoLine at 416-961-3200 or chat live using MSN messenger at spiderbytes@hotmail.com from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Monday to Wednesday and 12 noon to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. You can also email us a question anytime at askus@spiderbytes.ca or visit www.spiderbytes.ca.