



Hepatitis B

Your child may have been exposed to this disease on _____.
Date(s)

Please check your child for symptoms through _____.
Date

If your child has symptoms, please contact your child's healthcare provider.

If my child has this disease, when can he or she return to school or child care?

Children sick with hepatitis B may not return to school until their doctor or health care provider approves his or her return to school. A person who is a "carrier," meaning a person who does not have symptoms but still has the virus present in the body, may attend school or child care.

Hepatitis B is a virus that affects the liver. It usually does not cause symptoms in young children. Older children and adults are more likely to show symptoms.

Symptoms are:

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Muscle or joint pain
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea and vomiting
- Dark urine (the color of tea)
- Clay-colored stool (gray stool)
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes)

If a person gets sick, it will usually start 2 to 6 months after a person is exposed, but it can take up to 9 months. In some cases, such as in children younger than 5 years, hepatitis B causes no symptoms.

What can I do now?

If your child has not had the disease or the vaccine before, the illness may be prevented by getting the vaccine as soon as possible after exposure. For some people, hepatitis B immune globulin (HBIG) may also be given to reduce the risk of becoming sick. Call your child's doctor for more information. The majority of children are vaccinated for Hepatitis B before turning one year old.

Watch your child for symptoms of this disease. Call your child's doctor or health care provider if your child becomes sick. Talk to your doctor before giving your child any prescription, over-the-counter, or herbal medications that may damage the liver.

Hepatitis B can cause chronic infection. Infants, people with Down Syndrome, HIV, or kidney disease are more likely to develop chronic hepatitis B.

How is hepatitis B spread?

- Direct contact of infected blood with eyes, mouth, or open cuts
- Sharing needles, razors, toothbrushes, and ear piercing equipment
- Sexual activity involving contact with semen, blood, or vaginal secretions
- Being born to an infected mother

A person who is infected can spread the virus weeks before experiencing their first symptoms and until their symptoms resolve. People with chronic infection