

## **DIAGNOSIS**

You can get tested at a medical practice. To this end, a blood sample is taken and sent to a laboratory.

Many AIDS Service Organisations and public health departments also offer anonymous testing and counselling. AIDS Service Organisations additionally provide advice on cost coverage.

In Germany, pregnant women are offered screening for various infections, including a test for the hepatitis B virus.

## **TREATMENT**

Patients with acute hepatitis B should avoid excessive physical exertion, alcohol and medications that put additional strain on the liver.

Chronic hepatitis B is treated with medication. A cure is possible, but sometimes the medications need to be taken for life.

People who have recovered from a hepatitis B infection can no longer be infected with HBV.

## **IMPRESSUM**

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# HEPATITIS B: GOOD TO KNOW

Transmission – Protection – Treatment

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## KEY FACTS ABOUT HEPATITIS B

- Hepatitis B is an inflammation of the liver caused by the HB virus (HBV).
- The infection can become chronic, causing permanent illness.
- If left untreated, chronic hepatitis B can lead to liver failure or liver cancer.
- People from countries with high hepatitis B prevalence (e.g. in the Middle East, Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, the South Pacific, the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe) should get tested for and vaccinated against HBV.

- Hepatitis B is easily transmitted, especially through blood – for example during sex, when sharing syringes/needles for drug use or during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding.
- Pregnant women are routinely screened for hepatitis B. Mother-to-child transmission of HBV can be prevented.
- The best protection from hepatitis B is a vaccination. In Germany, vaccination is recommended for all infants.

## PROGRESSION AND SYMPTOMS

An acute infection often goes unnoticed. Possible symptoms include lack of appetite, fatigue, nausea, upper abdominal pain or flu-like symptoms. Only in rare cases does “jaundice” develop (yellowing of the eyes and the skin, brown urine, pale stool).

Hepatitis B becomes chronic in about 10% of adults, but in more than 90% of children.

In severe cases, chronic hepatitis B can lead to progressive loss of liver function and, less commonly, even liver cancer.

## PROTECTION

The best protection from hepatitis B is a vaccination. Health insurance funds cover the costs of a vaccination for babies, children and adolescents and for adults at an increased risk (such as people who inject drugs).

In addition, you can protect yourself from hepatitis by using sterile equipment (for example when tattooing and piercing) and not sharing syringes and needles with others when using drugs.

During sex, the use of condoms reduces the risk of infection.