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## What is Hepatitis B?

This is a blood borne viral infection. The Hepatitis B virus (HBV) causes hepatitis (inflammation of the liver) and can also cause long term liver damage.

## What are the symptoms of Hepatitis B?

It can take between 40 and 160 days before you experience symptoms. These may include a flu-like illness, sore throat, tiredness, joint pains and a loss of appetite including nausea and vomiting. However many people have no symptoms.

Acute infection can be severe causing abdominal discomfort and jaundice.

## How common is Hepatitis B?

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that in the UK the number of chronic Hepatitis B infection cases averages at 0.3%. Hepatitis B is far more common in other parts of the world such as South East Asia, Africa, the Middle and Far East and southern and eastern Europe.

## How do you get infected with the Hepatitis B virus?

The virus may be transmitted by contact with infected blood or body fluids.

The virus can be spread by the following routes:

- Sharing or use of contaminated equipment during injecting drug use,
- Vertical transmission (mother to baby) from an infectious mother to her unborn child,
- Sexual transmission,
- Needle stick or other sharps injuries (in particular those sustained by hospital personnel),
- Tattooing or body piercing.

## What is chronic Hepatitis B infection?

The failure to clear Hepatitis B infection after six months leads to chronic carrier state (meaning you are likely to always have it). Many people who become chronic carriers have no symptoms and are unaware that they are infected. These individuals will remain infectious and will be at risk of developing cirrhosis and primary liver cancer.

## How do you treat Hepatitis B infection?

Antiviral drugs can be used to treat patients with chronic Hepatitis B status. Not all patients are suitable for treatment.

## Do you need to stay off work or school?

- You do not have to stay home from work or school.
- When you are due to see your dentist you may be required to inform them of your hepatitis status.

## Will I have to stay in hospital until my Hepatitis B infection has cleared?

It is unlikely you will have to stay in hospital until your hepatitis infection has cleared.

## How will this affect my visitors?

- Visitors are allowed as normal.
- Please do not allow visitors to sit or lie on your bed.

## What happens when I go home?

You will be monitored by a haematologist for the duration of any treatment and afterwards.

## How can Hepatitis B infection be prevented?

There is a vaccine available to help prevent Hepatitis B infection. The vaccine should be given to all individuals who are at risk from infection.

## Further Information:

Please speak with an Infection Prevention & Control Nurse.

The Infection Prevention Team

Telephone: 01493 453136

## Feedback

We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible. Please talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/department staff are unable to resolve your concern, please ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care. **Before you leave the hospital you will be asked to complete a Friends and Family Test feedback card.** Providing your feedback is vital in helping to transform NHS services and to support patient choice.

### Trust Values

- Courtesy and respect
- A welcoming and positive attitude
- Polite, friendly and interested in people
- Value and respect people as individuals  
So people feel **welcome**
- Attentively kind and helpful
- Look out for dignity, privacy & humanity
- Attentive, responsive & take time to help
- Visible presence of staff to provide care  
So people feel **cared for**
- Responsive communication
- Listen to people & answer their questions
- Keep people clearly informed
- Involve people  
So people feel **in control**
- Effective and professional
- Safe, knowledgeable and reassuring
- Effective care / services from joined up teams
- Organised and timely, looking to improve  
So people feel **safe**



The hospital can arrange for an interpreter or person to sign to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay. Please let us know.

**For a large print version of this leaflet, contact PALS 01493 453240**