

TESTING FOR HEPATITIS B VIRUS (HBV) INFECTION

WHY TEST?

You can be infected with hepatitis B and not know it. HBV liver disease progresses silently. Most people infected with HBV feel fine, have no symptoms, and may have normal tests of liver function for many years.

HBV infection has serious consequences. Long-term, HBV infection may cause liver damage and liver cancer.

You can give HBV to the people you love. The virus is in blood and body fluids. A mother with HBV can give it to her baby at birth. HBV is also spread through sex, by sharing tattooing equipment or needles, and even by living with family or friends in the same household.

HBV can be treated. Medicines can slow or stop the virus from reproducing and reduce the progression to liver disease or cancer.

HBV vaccine doesn't help if you are already infected. The vaccine works to prevent infection, but does not treat HBV disease.

WHO MIGHT BE INFECTED?

Your risk of infection is higher if:

You or either one of your parents was born in Asia, Africa, the Amazon Basin, the Pacific Islands, Eastern Europe, or the Middle East.

You've lived, traveled for >6 months, or had sexual contact with the local population in Asia, Africa, the Amazon Basin, the Pacific Islands, Eastern Europe, or the Middle East, and you were not vaccinated beforehand.

You are a male who has had sex with other males

A sex partner of yours was infected with HBV

You've had a sexually transmitted disease, or have had unprotected sex with 2 or more partners

Someone with HBV lived in your household for >1 month

You've shared needles for drug use, tattoos, or piercing

You've had a blood transfusion, blood products, or dialysis

You've been exposed to human blood or body fluids at work

You are Alaskan Native or Native American

WHAT WILL THE TESTS SHOW?

You may be:

IMMUNE (PROTECTED) due to VACCINATION

You do not have HBV infection. You are protected from getting HBV. If you have started but not completed the full HBV vaccine series, you should complete it now.

IMMUNE (PROTECTED) due to RESOLVED INFECTION

You had HBV infection in the past and you cleared it. You cannot infect others. You are protected from getting HBV again. You do not need vaccine.

NOT IMMUNE (NOT PROTECTED)

You are not protected from getting HBV (another way of saying this is that you are not immune). You do not have HBV infection, but you could get it. You should protect yourself by getting a full hepatitis B vaccine series.

INFECTED

- ◆ There is virus in your blood and your liver. You must see a doctor for further medical evaluation and to discuss whether you need treatment.
- ◆ You can infect others. Your sex partner(s) and household members need HBV testing and vaccination. You should take steps to avoid infecting others by:
 - Using condoms to protect sex partners
 - Covering exposed cuts and skin lesions
 - Not donating blood, plasma, tissue, or semen
 - Not sharing personal articles (e.g. toothbrushes, razors, needles)

WHICH TESTS?

A small sample of blood is needed – about 1 teaspoon.

Three (3) tests are done:

- ◆ HBV Surface Antigen
- ◆ HBV Surface Antibody
- ◆ HBV Core Antibody, Total

FOR TEST RESULTS:

Contact AITC in 1 week to get your results and discuss what they mean for you.

**101 Grove Street
Room 102
San Francisco
(415) 554-2625**

