

Hepatitis B and hepatitis B testing

Summary

- Information about hepatitis B and sexual health is important for everyone to be safe, healthy and respectful.
- It is important to get a hepatitis B test to know if you have it.
- Having safe sex can keep you healthy and well.
- Getting vaccinated can stop you from getting hepatitis B.

What is hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is an infection that affects the liver and can make you sick.

Hepatitis B can be spread through contact with blood that contains hepatitis B. If infected blood or bodily fluids enter another person's bloodstream, that person can become infected. This could be through broken or penetrated skin, mucous membranes (mouth or genitals), or the eye.

It can spread through:

- unprotected vaginal, oral or anal sex (without a condom or dental dam)
- from mother to their baby during pregnancy or childbirth
- shared equipment or personal items, such as needles, syringes, toothbrushes, razors, sex toys, or unsterile medical equipment.

How do I know if I have hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B often has no symptoms. You need to get a hepatitis B test to know if you or your partner has hepatitis B.

If you have any of these symptoms, stop sexual activity and get a hepatitis B test as soon as possible:

- fever
- headache
- feeling sick (nausea)
- stomach pain
- flu like symptoms
- vomiting
- dark wee (urine)
- tiredness (fatigue)
- general aches and pains
- yellowing of the skin (jaundice).

Hepatitis B is not spread by casual contact such as hugging or holding hands, kissing on the cheek, coughing or sneezing, or sharing food or utensils.

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How can I protect myself from hepatitis B?

- Hepatitis B vaccination is the best protection and is very safe and reliable. Talk to your doctor about hepatitis B vaccination.
- Use condoms during sexual activity.
- Do not share injecting or tattooing equipment, razor blades, toothbrushes and sex toys with anyone.

You can get safe and clean injecting equipment from your [local needle and syringe program](#). These are free, anonymous and confidential services. You can also get sterile injecting equipment from some pharmacies.

What is a hepatitis B test?

Hepatitis B is tested for by a blood test. You need to ask your doctor to do a hepatitis B test. It is not part of regular blood tests done by your doctor. If you have been exposed to hepatitis B it is important to see your doctor straight away. There is no shame in getting tested for hepatitis, it is a normal part of staying healthy and well.

The doctor may ask questions about your sexual and blood exposure history to find out the tests you need. It is important to answer these questions honestly even if you feel nervous. These conversations are private.

Where can I get a hepatitis B test?

You can get a hepatitis B test at your local doctor (there may be costs involved) or a sexual health clinic (free). Call the NSW [Sexual Health Infolink](#) on 1800 451 624 to find a location near you.

Can you treat hepatitis B?

If you get Hepatitis B as an adult it can sometimes clear naturally without treatment. 5% of adults get chronic hepatitis B. If you get Hepatitis B as a baby or child, you can develop chronic health conditions that needs regular testing and care. People with hepatitis B can take medicines to prevent liver damage and help you stay healthy and live well. You can get the medicine from your doctor.

What do I do if the doctor tells me I have hepatitis B?

If the doctor tells you that you have hepatitis B (tested positive), it is important that you follow their advice, get further tests and, if needed, take treatment, so you stay healthy and well. You should also tell your sexual partners and people you live with so they can get tested and vaccinated or treated. This is a sign of respect.



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Where can I get help or more information?

To find out more information about hepatitis B in New South Wales, these services can help:

Service	What does it do?	Contact information
healthdirect	A free phone service where you can get health information and advice on any topic.	1800 022 222 Open 24 hours http://www.healthdirect.gov.au/
NSW Sexual Health Infolink	A free phone line where you can talk to a nurse about hepatitis B and hepatitis B testing.	1800 451 624 9am–5.30pm Monday to Friday https://www.shil.nsw.gov.au/palm-scheme
NSW Sexual Health Clinics	Free sexual health clinics for people in NSW.	Call the NSW Sexual Health Infolink (1800 451 624) to find your closest clinic. https://www.shil.nsw.gov.au/palm-scheme
Country Liaison Officer (CLO)	CLOs are people appointed by Pacific and Timor-Leste governments to support workers in Australia. They can provide you with local support.	You can find all current CLO contact details on the PALM website https://www.palmscheme.gov.au/contact
PALM scheme support line	If your employer cannot answer your questions, you can call the PALM scheme support service line.	1800 51 51 31 PALM@dewr.gov.au The support line and emails are monitored 8:30 am–6:30 pm AEST- calls after hours should be for critical incidents only.
Hepatitis NSW	A free phone line and website where you can get information and support about Hepatitis.	Call 1800 803 990 or visit https://www.hep.org.au/
Multicultural HIV & Hepatitis Service	The Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service (MHAHS) works with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in NSW to improve health and well-being in relation to HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C.	1800 108 098 https://www.mhahs.org.au/index.php/en/
NSW Council for Pacific Communities/Community Connections	The NSW Council for Pacific Communities runs the Community Connections Program. Community Connections helps PALM workers adapt to life in NSW and feel connected to NSW communities.	0451 021 919 CommunityConnections@SalvationArmy.org.au https://www.nswcpc.org.au/

If you would like an interpreter to help you access health services or information, please contact the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450.

