

## HEPATITIS B FACT SHEET

### What is Hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is a liver disease caused by the Hepatitis B virus (HBV). Cases of Hepatitis B can be acute or chronic. An acute case can last a few weeks while a chronic case can last many years. Many people with chronic Hepatitis do not show symptoms, but when symptoms do appear, it is between 6 weeks and 6 months after being infected with the virus.

### What are the symptoms of Hepatitis B?

- Diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite
- Joint pain, weakness and fatigue
- Dark color urine
- Yellowing of skin and white parts of eyes (called jaundice)
- Easy bruising or bleeding

### Who can get Hepatitis B?

Anyone can get Hepatitis B, but there are some people who are at greater risk of Hepatitis B, such as those who:

- Have sexual contact with an infected person
- Have multiple sex partners
- Have a sexually transmitted disease
- Are men who have sex with men
- Inject drugs or share needles
- Are exposed to blood during work
- Are infants with infected mothers

### How does a person get Hepatitis B?

Contact with HBV-infected blood and body fluids. Examples include:

- Having sex with an infected person without using a condom;
- Sharing needles (used for injecting drugs) with an infected person;
- Getting a tattoo or piercing with tools that were not properly cleaned;
- Sharing personal items like razors or toothbrushes with an infected person;
- An infected mother can give the virus to her baby at birth;

You CANNOT get Hepatitis B from the sweat or tears of an infected person, or by exposure to a swimming pool, telephone, or toilet seat used by an infected person. While HBV is found in saliva, it is very unlikely to be a source of transmission.

### How is Hepatitis B treated?

There is no medication available for short-term (acute) hepatitis, but once a person has recovered from acute hepatitis B, they are protected from future hepatitis B infections. People with long-term (chronic) hepatitis B should consult their doctor about possible medication options. There are several new treatments available that can improve health and delay or reverse the effects of liver disease.

### How is Hepatitis B prevented?

- Vaccination is the most effective prevention method. It is given in a series of three shots, and is recommended for all children under the age of 18.
- Do NOT share personal items such as needles, razors, toothbrushes, or any item that may have blood on it.
- Use a condom or latex barrier during sex.
- Do NOT get a body piercing or tattoo with equipment that is not sterilized.

- Do NOT donate blood, organs, or sperm if you have ever tested positive for HBV.

For more information please contact Contra Costa Public Health at 925-313-6740 and visit our website at <http://cchealth.org/cd/>

Additional information may be found at the following links:

<http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/HBV/PDFs/HepBGeneralFactSheet-BW.pdf>

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/HepatitisB.aspx>