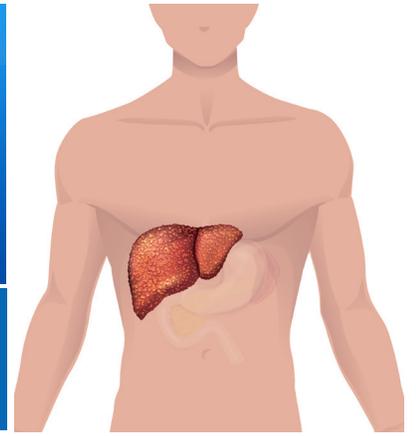


Living with chronic hepatitis B



You have chronic hepatitis B. This health sheet explains this disease. It explains why it's important to go to all your appointments, have your exams, and follow your treatments. It also describes the precautions you should take.

What is hepatitis B?

It's a liver infection caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV). It causes inflammation of the liver.

In some cases, the body eliminates the virus in less than 6 months. This is called acute hepatitis B.

What is chronic hepatitis B?

In other cases, the virus stays longer than 6 months. The body has not been able to get rid of it. The virus can then cause a long-term liver infection. This is called chronic hepatitis B.

Why do I have this disease?

The virus is transmitted from person to person through blood. It's also transmitted through other bodily fluids, such as semen or vaginal secretions.

It may have been transmitted to you, for example:

- through contact with the blood of an infected person
- during unprotected sex
- by your mother during pregnancy or childbirth

- by sharing sex toys, personal hygiene items (such as razors or nail clippers), or drug preparation or injection equipment with an infected person
- by contact with contaminated tattoo ink or needles



Why is my follow-up important?

You can have chronic hepatitis B **without having any symptoms**. This happens a lot. You still need to be careful. The disease could progress without your realizing it and cause serious problems.

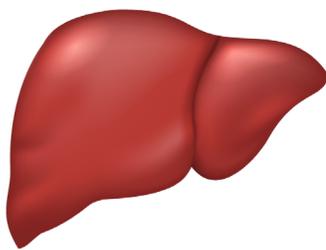
To avoid these problems, **it's important to have your exams, follow your treatments, and take certain precautions.**



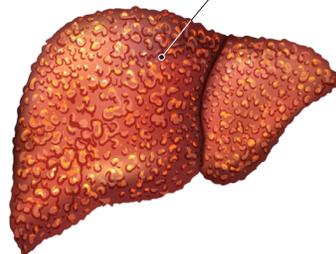
What problems can hepatitis B cause?

Inflammation sometimes causes scarring of the liver (fibrosis). This increases the risk of developing:

- cirrhosis
- liver cancer



Normal liver



Liver with cirrhosis

This risk increases over time if you:

- drink alcohol
- smoke
- have fat buildup in your liver, also called fatty liver disease
- have family members who have had cirrhosis or liver cancer
- are from Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, or Southern Europe

What exams do I need to have?

To prevent the development of cirrhosis or cancer, you need to have **regular exams**.

Blood tests. These tests show how much virus is in your body (viral load) or if you have inflammation.

FibroScan or biopsy. To determine how much scarring is in your liver, you may:

- go through an exam that uses sound waves (FibroScan)
- have a small sample of your liver taken for analysis (biopsy)



Abdominal ultrasound. This is done using sound waves. It allows doctors to see if there is anything abnormal in the liver. In general, it should be done every 6 months.

How is the disease treated?

There is no cure for the disease. However, medications can reduce the amount of virus. They help prevent serious problems. Your doctor will tell you if you need to take any medication. It depends on your situation and the results of your blood tests.

Are there precautions I should take?

Avoid unprotected sex, as you can transmit the virus.

Tell every healthcare professional you see (doctor, dentist, nurse) that you have hepatitis B. Also tell any professional who needs to pierce your skin (acupuncturist, tattoo artist, beautician).

The following people should be tested if they have not been vaccinated against hepatitis B:

- people with whom you've had sex
- people who live with you
- people with whom you've shared drugs

Screening is done through a blood test. To do this, consult a health professional or call **811**.

What should I do if I'm pregnant?

You can be pregnant even if you have hepatitis B. As soon as you find out you're pregnant, tell your care team. They'll follow up with you. If necessary, you may be given treatment during and after pregnancy. After the birth, the baby is always vaccinated for protection.



How can I take care of myself now?

- Take your medication as prescribed.
- Go to all your follow-up exams, even if you don't have symptoms.
- Reduce or stop drinking alcohol and smoking.
- Eat a variety of foods that contain as little sugar and fat as possible.
- Be physically active or walk at least 20 minutes a day.

Are there signs I should watch for?

It's rare to have symptoms related to hepatitis B. Follow-ups are done to see whether there has been any change in the liver. This allows for action to be taken before you have symptoms. In some cases, however, the disease can still progress to a very serious stage. Some symptoms it can cause are:

- skin and eyes turning yellow
- abdominal swelling
- vomiting red blood
- vomit that looks like ground coffee
- dark black stools
- stools with red blood

If you have any of these symptoms, call the CHUM Hepatology Clinic at **514 890-8255**. It's open Monday to Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Outside of these business hours, if you're a CHUM patient, you can call a nurse at the **CHUM Patient Health Line**, at **514 890-8086**.

Who can I call if I need anything?

If you need to cancel or reschedule an appointment, call the Appointment Centre at **514 890-8051**, Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. If you have questions about your health, ask your follow-up nurse at the number below.

Telephone : _____.



USEFUL RESOURCES

Canadian Liver Foundation

www.liver.ca

It offers a guide to eating well with liver disease. At the top of the Web page, in the search bar, type "pantry" → Click on "Healthy Liver Pantry"

The foundation also has a helpline:
1 800 563-5483

Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
This foundation also has a peer support network. You can talk with people who have liver disease or with their loved ones.

Other health sheets published by the CHUM are available. Ask for those that might fit your situation.



You can also find them
on our website

chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante

The content of this document in no way replaces the advice of your healthcare professional.

To find out more about the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal
chumontreal.qc.ca