

# Your Journey with Hepatitis B



For more information scan this QR code or go to [myhealth.alberta.ca/hepatitis-b-pathway](https://myhealth.alberta.ca/hepatitis-b-pathway)

**Hepatitis B is a liver infection caused by the hepatitis B virus. Most people living with hepatitis B got it when they were young and not immunized. The younger you are when you get it, the more likely it will become a chronic (long-term) infection. If you have hepatitis B or are a contact of someone who has it, this pathway can help. Managing hepatitis B is possible.** You are the most important part of your healthcare team. This guide will help you to know what to expect as you work with your team to manage and treat hepatitis B. If you have any questions along the way, please ask your healthcare team.

## Understand who is most at risk

- Anyone can get hepatitis B and those who aren't vaccinated are most at risk.
- Some people have a higher chance of getting hepatitis B (e.g., if the person who gave birth to you had hepatitis B when you were born, or if you live with or have sex with someone who has hepatitis B).
- Make an appointment to see your healthcare provider.



## Visit your healthcare provider

- Consider bringing a family member or friend to support you.
- Share how you feel, your symptoms, and concerns. Your healthcare provider needs to hear from you and understand who you are and what matters to you.
- Your health includes physical, emotional, spiritual, financial, and social elements.



## Get your tests

- A blood test is the only way to confirm if you have hepatitis B, recovered from it in the past, or were exposed to the hepatitis B virus (HBV).
- If your results show you have hepatitis B, your healthcare provider will order follow-up blood tests and an ultrasound of your abdomen to check your liver health.
- You and your healthcare team will need your blood test results to decide the correct treatment plan for you.



## Review your results with your provider or public health nurse

- If blood tests show you have hepatitis B, your healthcare provider or public health nurse will help you understand what your results mean, discuss next steps to protect yourself and those around you, and answer questions you have.
- You will be referred to a specialist to explore what management is right for you. Ask how long it will take to see a specialist and what to do if you don't hear back.



## See a specialist to help you manage your hepatitis B

- Your healthcare team will give you important strategies to keep you as healthy as possible. These include things like physical activity, food, and drink choices to keep your liver healthy.
- Your specialist may recommend medicines based on how active the virus is in your body and the health of your liver. These medicines, called antiviral medicines, help to slow or stop the growth of the virus, and help protect your liver.
- By deciding what works best for you, and following the recommended treatment and management strategies, people with hepatitis B can continue to live meaningful lives.



## Keep taking care of yourself and protect others

- Your healthcare team will help you understand how to best manage your health and protect your household and sexual contacts. These includes things like physical activity, food, and drink choices to keep your liver healthy, and things you can do to prevent spreading the virus to others. If you don't understand something, ask.
- People with chronic hepatitis B should have regular monitoring, including specialist visits and blood work, to assess liver health. Consistent care is key to your treatment and safety.
- Close contacts of a person living with hepatitis B should get the vaccine series if they haven't already gotten it. Vaccination is the best way to prevent hepatitis B infection, and it is safe and effective.



Whole-person health

### Important Tips:

#### Need a family doctor?

[ahs.ca/findadoctor](https://ahs.ca/findadoctor)

#### Need a translator or interpreter?

Let your healthcare provider know

#### Need health advice?

Call Health Link at 811

#### Need to find programs and resources in your community?

Call 211 or visit [ab.211.ca](https://ab.211.ca)



Primary Care  
Alberta