



Just diagnosed with hepatitis B



**This leaflet is here to help while
you are waiting. It tells you about:**

- What hepatitis B is
- What happens next
- Protecting other people
- Looking after your health
- Where to get more information and support

liveruk.org

**Liver UK is the new name for the British Liver Trust
and Children's Liver Disease Foundation**

What is hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is a virus that lives in your liver. Millions of people around the world are living with it.

It's passed on through blood and body fluids, for example during birth. Most people got the virus when they were born or as a small child.

Long term infections can lead to serious liver disease (cirrhosis) or liver cancer. But most people stay healthy with hepatitis B.

There is no cure yet. The virus can be controlled by your immune system or with treatment. Controlling it helps stop serious harm.

People at risk of hepatitis B can get a free vaccine to protect them from it.

I was diagnosed as a child and didn't really understand until I was older.

Now I get through by spending time with my children, walking every day, and talking about it with people I trust."



What happens next?

You need to see a specialist at a hospital. You might have to wait several months. Try not to worry. Make a list of questions to take with you. You can ask for an interpreter if you need one.

The specialist will do tests such as blood tests and liver scans to check:

- How active the virus is
- Whether your liver has been damaged
- If you need to have treatment



Keeping the virus level low stops it damaging your liver. In most cases, your immune system can do this. Some people need treatment, which is usually a tablet you take every day.

It's very important to go to all your appointments and check-ups. Even if you feel well or you aren't on treatment. The virus can get more active and damage your liver without you knowing.

Your test results are confidential. They do not affect the chance of claiming asylum or settling an immigration claim.

Protecting other people

People you are close to could also get hepatitis B. Or they may already have it.

This includes:

- People who live in your household, including children
- People you have sex with

You can help look after them by talking to them about your test results. You can show them this leaflet to help explain.

People you are close to should ask their GP for a **free test for hepatitis B** to check they do not have it. They can also get a **free, safe vaccine** that is very good at protecting people from hepatitis B.

It's free to register with a GP.

Visit **www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp** to find one near you.

Hepatitis B is passed on when people's blood or body fluids mix. That means it cannot be passed on by making or sharing food, hugging, or kissing.

You can help stop the virus getting passed on.

- **Use a condom or dam to have sex, unless your partner is fully vaccinated or also lives with hepatitis B.**
- **Do not share anything that can get blood on it eg razors, toothbrushes, needles.**
- **Cover cuts, scratches and wounds with a plaster and clean up blood spills with a bleach solution.**

Looking after your health

You can do things to look after your health now, while you wait for your appointment.

- Eat a healthy diet
- Do not drink alcohol
- Be physically active and exercise
- Get plenty of sleep
- Go to all your check-ups
- Always tell health professionals you've had a positive hepatitis B test, so they can check medicine is safe for you to have

Look after your mental health too. Talking to people can help. Think about who you trust and start there. Liver UK have support groups where you can meet other people living with hepatitis B.

Hepatitis B often causes no symptoms. You might feel like you have mild flu or notice some itching. For help managing these symptoms, talk to your GP surgery or pharmacy.

Hepatitis B can cause serious problems. If you have any of these symptoms go to A&E:

- **Feeling extremely tired**
- **Yellow skin or eyes (jaundice)**
- **A swollen belly**
- **Vomiting blood or dark, tar-like poo**

Information and support for you

It's normal to have questions or need some support. Liver UK are here for you.

To speak to someone who understands, call the **FREE Liver UK nurse helpline** on **0800 652 7330**.

We have lots of information about hepatitis B. You can also join a support group or our online community.

To find out more scan the code or visit



www.liveruk.org/hep-b



This resource provides general information but does not replace personal medical advice. It is important to contact your medical team if you have any worries or concerns.

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