

UNDERSTANDING HEPATITIS B

► **Hepatitis B** is a disease that affects your liver. It is caused by the Hepatitis B Virus.

Hepatitis B is very infectious and can be spread through infected blood, semen, saliva and vaginal secretions.

Most people who get Hepatitis B can get rid of the virus on their own. But others can develop chronic (lifelong) infection which can lead to liver damage, liver cancer and death. Hepatitis B can be prevented with a safe and effective vaccine.

Call Hep-C ALERT to learn about local resources for prevention, vaccination and testing.

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HOW IS HEPATITIS B SPREAD?

Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) is spread when blood or body fluids from an infected person enters the body of a person who is not infected. HBV can be spread:

- Through having sex with an infected person without using a condom
- By sharing drugs, needles, or "works" when injecting drugs
- Through needle-sticks or sharps exposures on the job
- From an infected mother to her baby during birth

WHO'S AT RISK?

Anyone can acquire Hepatitis B, however the rates of infection are particularly high among certain groups including:

- People with multiple sex partners
- Sex contacts of infected persons
- Injection drug users
- Household contacts of chronically infected persons
- Infants born to infected mothers

HOW IS IT PREVENTED?

- Get vaccinated. The vaccine is very effective and can keep you from ever getting infected
- Use condoms correctly and every time you have sex
- Don't share personal care items like razors, toothbrushes and nail clippers
- Don't share needles or "works" to inject drugs
- Don't share needles for tattoo/piercing
- If you are pregnant, get tested for Hepatitis B to make sure you don't pass the virus on to your baby

**ARE YOU AT RISK?
GET TESTED. GET VACCINATED!**