

Hepatitis B

Definition: Hepatitis B is a contagious liver disease that ranges in severity from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a serious, lifelong illness. It results from infection with the Hepatitis B virus. Hepatitis B can be either “acute” or “chronic.” Hepatitis” means inflammation of the liver. Toxins, certain drugs, some diseases, heavy alcohol use, and bacterial and viral infections can all cause hepatitis. Hepatitis is also the name of a family of viral infections that affect the liver; the most common types are Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C.

Transmission: Hepatitis B is spread when blood, semen, or other body fluid infected with the Hepatitis B virus enters the body of a person who is not infected. People can become infected with the virus during activities such as:

- Birth (spread from an infected mother to her baby during birth)
- Sex with an infected partner
- Sharing needles, syringes, or other drug-injection equipment
- Sharing items such as razors or toothbrushes with an infected person
- Direct contact with the blood or open sores of an infected person
- Exposure to blood from needle sticks or other sharp instruments

Symptoms:

- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Dark urine
- Clay-colored bowel movements
- Joint pain
- Jaundice (yellow color in the skin or the eyes)
- Fever

Exposure: This is a blood borne disease in which you need to be exposed to someone else’s blood or OPIM.

Precautions and PPE considerations: Gloves, eye protection and a gown should be considered for this patient. Be even more careful with the Sharps Box

Treatments: Pts are given the vaccine and monitored for up to 7 days. This is the initial treatment. There is no cure.

Work Guidelines: You will be treated by the infectious disease physician if an exposure is determined. He will determine course of treatment and work restriction guidelines.