

Common Questions

Is it safe to breastfeed my baby?

Yes, it is safe to breast/chest feed your baby. HBV is not transmitted through breastmilk. However, avoid breast/chest feeding if your nipples are cracked or bleeding.

What kind of delivery should I have?

You can have a vaginal delivery or a c-section. C-sections have not been found to prevent HBV transmission.

How can I pass Hep B to others?

HBV can be transmitted through unprotected sex and blood. HBV is not transmitted through saliva, coughing or sneezing. You can hug and kiss your baby without fear of spreading HBV.



Other Resources

Washington State Department of Health

doh.wa.gov/phbpp

Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program

phbpp@doh.wa.gov

If you are pregnant and have tested positive for HBV you can get support or assistance with referrals to treatment, if applicable.



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A Guide for Pregnant & Postpartum People Living with Hepatitis B Virus (HBV)



Protect your Baby from Perinatal Hepatitis B

If you have HBV and are pregnant, it can be passed to your baby at birth. This is known as perinatal HBV.

Infants with perinatal HBV have a 90% chance of having the disease for life.

There is no cure for hepatitis B but there are treatments to help you stay healthy and prevent your infant from getting perinatal HBV.



Get your Baby Vaccinated & Tested

The only way to prevent HBV is with a safe & effective vaccine

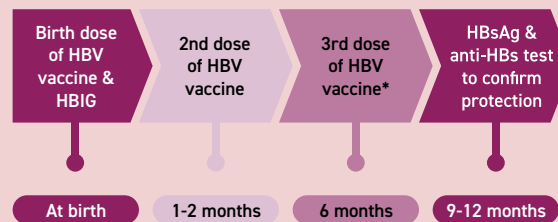
The Hepatitis B vaccine should be given to all infants at birth to protect them from HBV. It is safe, even for premature babies.

These 3 shots* (given over 6 months) of HBV vaccine can protect your baby against HBV for life.

If you have HBV, your baby should also receive the HBIG[†] shot at birth, to fully protect them from getting HBV.

*Infants weighing less than 2,000g and infants receiving HBV combination vaccines need an additional 4th dose of HBV vaccine given at 4 months. Your infant's pediatrician will determine if your infant needs 3 or 4 HBV vaccines.

[†]Low birth weight infants may need an additional HBIG dose.



At 9-12 months of age, blood tests are needed to check that your infant is not sick and has protection against HBV.

KNOW YOUR STATUS

All pregnant people in the US should be screened for hepatitis B virus. The only way to test for HBV is through a blood test.

An HBV test tells you if you have HBV infection and if you can pass it to others.

Ask your doctor for the results of your hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) test.

HBsAg(+)	HBsAg(-)
infected	not infected

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

If you test positive for hepatitis B virus, it is important to have regular visits with an HBV specialist.

It is recommended for pregnant people with HBV DNA over 200,000 IU/mL to be considered for HBV treatment during pregnancy to reduce risk of transmission. Ask your doctor to be evaluated for treatment.

Avoid drinking alcohol and review all medications with your doctor, including over-the-counter or herbal medications.

PROTECT YOUR LOVED ONES

The hepatitis B virus can be transmitted through unprotected sex and through blood-to-blood contact.

Don't share items that may be contaminated with blood such as injection equipment, razors, or nail clippers.

Make sure your partner and other household members are tested and vaccinated for HBV.