

# Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a viral infection which causes serious inflammation of the liver.

The symptoms can take up to 6-months to show themselves and many people who contract Hep B show few symptoms.

Initial symptoms can include: -

**A fever with flu like aches of the muscles and joints**

**Nausea and vomiting**

**Weight loss**

**Severe loss of appetite**

While many people recover after about 8-weeks, the infection can reappear and so it is very important to seek medical help if you think you may have come into contact with someone who has Hep B.

If left untreated, the infection can develop into jaundice, and can cause serious liver problems including cirrhosis. Often this only shows itself many years after the initial infection.

Hep B is spread by contact with body fluids such as semen, blood, vaginal secretions, anal secretions, urine and saliva.

It can be caught during any kind of unprotected sex, or from contaminated needles used in drug abuse, tattooing, acupuncture or body piercing.

It is very, very contagious, and while unprotected sex is certainly one way of catching it, it is most commonly seen in drug users who share needles.

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