

HEPATITIS - B (HBV)
(Reportable Disease - Report to Local Health Agency)

- IMMUNIZATION:** Part of standard childhood immunization schedule.
- INCUBATION PERIOD:** Generally 60-90 days, ranges from 45-180 days and on occasion as long as 9 months.
- SYMPTOMS:** Can be asymptomatic for all ages. Infection in children is symptomatic in less than 10% of cases.
Typical signs and symptoms include any or all of the following: fatigue, loss of appetite, dark urine, light stools, nausea, vomiting, yellowing of eyes/skin (jaundice) and abdominal pain - all indistinguishable from other types of hepatitis.
- PERIOD OF COMMUNICABILITY:** Several weeks before symptoms appear and throughout the acute clinical course of the disease. For persons who become chronic carriers - infectivity is for life. Persons testing "e" antigen (HBeAg) positive are highly infectious.
- MODE OF TRANSMISSION:** Spread by direct contact with infected body fluids (blood, semen, vaginal secretions, saliva), and most commonly by sexual contact, needle sharing, needle stick injury or mother-to-infant perinatal transmission. Because HBV is stable on environmental surfaces for equal to or greater than 7 days, transmission can occur via contact with contaminated objects/items.
- SCHOOL ATTENDANCE:** Because hepatitis B is not spread by casual contact, child exclusion from school is not generally warranted or justified. Children who are HBV carriers and who do not have behavioral or medical risk factors (i.e.: unusually aggressive behavior/biting, generalized dermatitis, or a bleeding problem) should be admitted without restrictions.
- CONTACTS/FOLLOW-UP:** If case is pregnant, careful follow-up must be done to assure appropriate treatment of the newborn.
It is recommended that unimmunized household and intimate contacts be immunized. Hepatitis B immunoglobulin (HBIG) should be simultaneously administered dependent upon type of exposure.