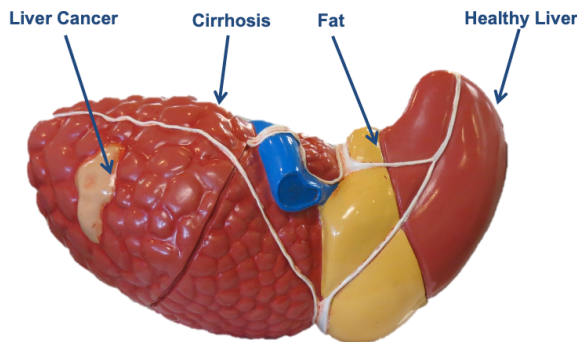


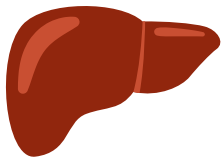
WHAT IS HEPATITIS B?

- Hepatitis B is a virus which causes damage to the liver
- Spread through the blood to blood and infected bodily fluids
- Enters the blood and infects the liver
- May lead to serious liver disease including cirrhosis (scarring) or liver cancer



Chronic hepatitis B occurs if the virus has been in the body for more than six months.

WHY IS THE LIVER IMPORTANT?



The liver is the largest organ in the body. It has more than 500 functions, including fighting infections, filtering waste product, aiding digestion, storing sugar, iron and vitamins to give your body energy, and helping with blood clotting.

The liver can also repair itself.

It is safe and recommended to breastfeed your baby if you have Hepatitis B. If you have any questions, please contact your health professional.



WHERE CAN I GET HELP OR MORE INFORMATION?

The Hepatitis Foundation of New Zealand can provide support and information to pregnant women and their families about hepatitis B in pregnancy.



**The Hepatitis Foundation
of New Zealand**

www.hepatitisfoundation.org.nz

0800 33 20 10

PO Box 647, Whakatāne

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2 Hepatitis B & Pregnancy Nov 2023



**The Hepatitis
Foundation
of New Zealand**

Hepatitis B and Pregnancy

Hepatitis B, help, care and support
Hepatitis B āwhina, tiaki me te tautoko



SHOULD I BE TESTED FOR HEPATITIS B IF I AM PREGNANT?

Yes. All pregnant women should be tested for hepatitis B as part of their maternity care during early pregnancy. Your doctor or midwife will organise this as part of your early pregnancy blood tests.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO BE TESTED?

Women with chronic hepatitis B infection can pass the infection on to their baby just before, or during, delivery. If your doctor or midwife is aware you have hepatitis B, your baby will be given hepatitis B immunisation and immunoglobulin soon after birth.

If you are positive for hepatitis B your mid-wife or doctor should refer you to The Hepatitis Foundation or you can contact us for a self-referral.

IF I AM PREGNANT AND HAVE HEPATITIS B, HOW CAN I PROTECT MY BABY?

If you test positive for hepatitis B, your baby may become infected at birth. Your baby should be given two injections soon after delivery to provide protection.

The two injections are:

1. The first dose of the hepatitis B vaccine
2. A dose of hepatitis B immunoglobulin (HBIG)

If these two injections are given within the first 12 hours after birth, your baby's chances of being protected against hepatitis B are more than 95 per cent.

However, you should ensure your baby receives the additional doses of the hepatitis B vaccine at six weeks, three and five months of age to ensure complete protection. Your baby should have a blood test at nine months to ensure they are fully protected from infection. (hepatitis B vaccine is part of the normal infant vaccine mix given at these times).

IT IS IMPORTANT THESE IMMUNISATIONS ARE GIVEN TO PROTECT YOUR BABY FROM HEPATITIS B.

HOW TO FURTHER REDUCE THE RISK TO YOUR UNBORN BABY

If you test positive for hepatitis B, you should be tested to check whether you have a high level of the hepatitis B virus in your blood. There is still a small chance your baby will become infected while in the womb (before the immunisations can work).

If you have high levels you may be offered a tablet called tenofovir. Your doctor can prescribe this or your midwife or the Hepatitis Foundation may refer you to a specialist. This tablet is started in the third trimester and continued until your doctor advises. It stops the hepatitis B virus from multiplying, thereby helping stop the virus from crossing the placenta and infecting your baby.

This treatment is safe for you and your baby, and you can breastfeed while taking it.



**Find out more:
hepatitisfoundation.org.nz**