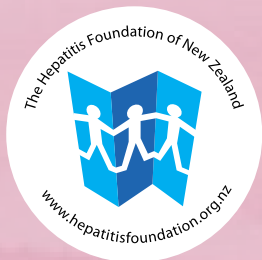


## *To reduce your risk if your hepatitis B is active*

Occasionally (about 1 in 20 cases), the hepatitis B virus can damage your liver during pregnancy. If this damage is very active, this may slow the baby's growth or make the baby deliver early. If you test positive for hepatitis B, you should be tested to check whether you have a high level of the liver enzymes. If you do, your doctor or midwife will refer you to see a specialist at the hospital who may offer you tenofovir. This is safe to take during pregnancy and while breastfeeding. After you finish breastfeeding, you may be changed to another tablet called entecavir. You will be monitored by either your GP or the hospital.

## *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. For more information contact our free helpline on **0800 33 20 10** or see the website **[www.hepatitisfoundation.org.nz](http://www.hepatitisfoundation.org.nz)**.



## **The Hepatitis Foundation of New Zealand**

61 Alexander Ave, Whakatane, New Zealand

*Phone* 07 307 1259 *Fax* 07 307 1266



*Hepatitis Helpline* 0800 33 20 10

hepteam@hfnz.nz

[www.hepatitisfoundation.org.nz](http://www.hepatitisfoundation.org.nz)

# Hepatitis B

## *Hepatitis B and Pregnancy*

## *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 for pregnant women to have a test for hepatitis B?*

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

## *Will hepatitis B affect my pregnancy?*

Hepatitis B infection does not usually cause any problems for you or your unborn baby during pregnancy. It is important your doctor or midwife is aware of your hepatitis B infection in order to monitor your health, and so your baby can be protected from infection soon after birth.


## *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. To provide protection, your baby must be given two injections soon after delivery. 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 of birth, your baby has more than 95% chance of being protected against hepatitis B infection.

**However, you must make sure your baby receives the additional doses of hepatitis B vaccine at six weeks, three and five months of age to ensure complete**



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

**protection. Your baby should have a blood test at nine months of age to make sure it is fully protected from infection.**

**IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THESE IMMUNISATIONS ARE GIVEN TO PROTECT YOUR BABY.**

## *Further reduce the risk to your unborn baby*

If you have very high levels 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 test positive for hepatitis B, you should be tested to check whether you have a high level of the hepatitis B virus in the blood, in which case, your doctor or midwife will refer you to see a specialist at the hospital where you may be offered a tablet called tenofovir. This tablet is taken for the last 8 to 12 weeks of pregnancy (the third trimester) and is usually stopped 4 to 12 weeks after your baby is born. It stops the hepatitis B virus multiplying, thereby stopping the virus crossing the placenta to infect your baby. This treatment is safe for you and your baby, and you can breastfeed while taking it.