

Yorkshire MESMAC

Sexual Health Leaflet.

Hepatitis B



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This leaflet is designed for men who have sex with men. It provides you with information about hepatitis B.

What is it?

Hepatitis B is a virus, which can cause damage to your liver. It is common among Gay men, Bisexual men and men who have sex with men.

What are the symptoms of Hepatitis B?

- Most people have no obvious symptoms. However, you may get a flu-like illness, loss of appetite, tiredness, nausea and vomiting, jaundice (yellow eyes and skin), abdominal pain, and dark urine.
- You can have the virus for between one and six months before showing any symptoms and still be infectious.
- After several months, most people get rid of the virus and stop being infectious.
- 10% of infected adults go on to become long-term carriers, which means they carry the virus for the rest of their lives and remain infectious to others.

How is Hepatitis B treated?

- People with mild symptoms will be offered painkillers and advised to rest, eat healthily and avoid alcohol. Occasionally people need hospital assessment.
- Long term carriers may need to take medication to help protect the liver and suppress the virus.

How is Hepatitis B passed on?

- It can be passed on through unprotected sex, sharing injecting equipment, snorting straws, razors or toothbrushes, tattooing with non-sterile equipment, and contact with contaminated blood through the mouth, eyes or cuts in your skin.
- It is present in body fluids such as blood, cum and pre-cum, saliva and urine.
- It is much more infectious than HIV.

How is Hepatitis B prevented?

- Get vaccinated for free from the Sexual Health Clinic. If you go to your GP, they may charge.
- The vaccination course you are likely to be offered is a vaccination dose on Day 0, Day 7 and Day 21 with a booster dose in 1 year.
- Following the booster dose at 1 year, you will have a blood test to check if you are immune.
- If the blood test confirms that you are immune, i.e. the vaccination has worked, you do not require any further booster doses unless advised by a clinician.
- If you are living with HIV then you may be offered a different vaccination course.
- Using condoms with water or silicone based lubricant for anal and vaginal sex can reduce the likelihood of transmission of hepatitis B, if you have not been vaccinated.
- Use dental dams or condoms for oral sex (including rimming).

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Turn on to sexual health.

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For more information, contact 0113 244 4209 or visit mesmac.co.uk