



Special Populations

Ethnicity, Race and Hepatitis B

The prevalence of hepatitis B (HBV) in the United States varies depending on race and ethnicity. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) surveillance data from 2016 show that Asian and Pacific Islanders (APIs) have the highest HBV incidence by a significant margin. APIs make up less than 5 percent of the total U.S. population but account for more than 50 percent of the roughly one million chronically infected Americans.

One in 12 Asian Americans are chronically infected, whereas one in 1,000 whites have HBV. In the United States, more than one third of Asian Americans do not know that they have chronic hepatitis B infection.

Whites have the second highest prevalence of HBV (11.7 percent), followed closely by Blacks (9.1 percent). The prevalence rate in Latinos is 3 percent; American Indian and Alaska Natives have the lowest incidence of hep B at 0.3 percent.

The hepatitis B death rate in the United States also varies by race and ethnicity. According to the CDC, APIs are eight to 13 times more likely to develop liver cancer and are more likely to die from hep B-related causes compared with all other groups. Compared with whites, the liver cancer death rate is 60 percent higher for APIs.

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