



Special Populations

Hepatitis B and C Coinfection

Chronic hepatitis B virus infection (HBV) is a liver disease. Some people are also infected with a different type of virus that affects the liver, hepatitis C virus (HCV). When someone with hep B is also infected with hep C, the term used is HBV/HCV coinfection. The prevalence of HBV/HCV coinfection is not precisely known. According to the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey III, about 25 percent of people with hepatitis C in the United States had positive hepatitis B markers.

Although both viruses target the liver, they are completely different viruses. Hep B is a DNA virus, whereas hep C is an RNA virus. Each virus relies on a different part of the cell in order to replicate. Like hep B, hep C can cause lifelong infection; over time, it can cause fibrosis (mild to moderate liver scarring), serious liver damage and death. Having both HBV and HCV puts a huge strain on the liver, increasing the risk of [cirrhosis](#), [liver cancer](#), liver failure and the need for [liver transplantation](#).

This burden to the liver may be reduced, because, unlike hepatitis B, [hep C is curable](#). However, all HCV-positive people with a history of HBV should be aware of a recent warning by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The FDA issued a black-box warning about the potential reactivation of hep B during hep C treatment using direct-acting antivirals. The FDA recommends hep B testing for all people before beginning hep C treatment and to monitor individuals who test positive for hep B flare-ups or reactivation during hep C treatment as well as during follow-up after treatment. Visit HCVguidelines.org for additional information.

If you are living with HBV and are not coinfecting with HCV, please check out [HEP's comprehensive lesson](#) on the diagnosis, monitoring and treatment of hepatitis B.

If you are living with HCV and are not coinfecting with HBV, vaccination against hepatitis B is highly recommended. For information on the diagnosis, monitoring and treatment of HIV, check out [POZ's comprehensive lesson](#).

Hepatitis A vaccination [is recommended](#) for people who have not had hep A.

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