



Special Populations

Newly Diagnosed With Hepatitis B

It can be upsetting and overwhelming to find out that you have hepatitis B. You probably have many questions. Your mind may be churning, wondering how you got hep B, how serious it is or whether you could die from it.

Let's start with good news: Hepatitis B is a manageable disease. Knowing that you have it gives you and your doctor the opportunity to [monitor its progression](#) and [treat it when necessary](#). Moreover, researchers are developing better medicines to treat it, and some experts believe that a cure for hep B is a few years away.

The fact that hepatitis B is a manageable disease does not mean that you shouldn't take it seriously. The hepatitis B death rate is climbing. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Approximately 25 percent of those who become chronically infected during childhood and 15 percent of those who become chronically infected after childhood die prematurely from cirrhosis or liver cancer, and the majority remain asymptomatic until onset of cirrhosis or end-stage liver disease." However, the fact that you know you have hep B works in your favor, because knowing means you can do something about it.

It can be scary at first, but with the help of your health care provider along with good information, support and a tincture of time, these fears will fade. What you don't know yet is that hepatitis B can teach you how to live better. It can act as a wake-up call, motivating many of us to take [better care of our health](#).

So if you're newly diagnosed with hep B, take a deep breath, work closely with a health care provider and begin surrounding yourself with the support you need. Here is some basic information to help you get started on the road to health:

Establish a good relationship with your medical provider. Finding a good doctor is easier said than done. Sometimes it takes a few appointments before you know whether a medical provider is right for you.

Connect with others. Hepatitis B is more easily endured in the company of others also living with the disease. Research shows that support groups can provide multiple health benefits. There are also virtual hepatitis B groups, such as the [HEP Forums](#). You can also connect to others who understand what it's like to live with hepatitis by reading the [HEP Blogs](#) and [HEP Stories](#).

Find support. A friend or family member can be a great source of support when you are newly

diagnosed. Consider choosing one or two people you think might best handle the news. Of course, it's not easy to predict exactly how people will respond—even if you've known them for years. Sadly, [hepatitis B is stigmatized](#), and although stigma is wrong, it's best to be prepared to deal with it. Here are tips on [hep B disclosure](#). If you're not ready to tell anyone about your diagnosis, that's OK.

Get the facts. Hepatitis B is a big subject, and there is lots of information on it. HEP offers a full range of [hep B information](#). You can stay current by keeping up with the latest [hepatitis news](#), finding out about [events](#) and reading [HEP magazine](#).

Build health. Hepatitis B is a liver disease, and everything goes through your [liver](#), whether you eat it, drink it, breathe it or apply it to your skin. Before you eat something, ask yourself, "Is this good for my liver?" Question every [drug](#), [supplement](#) and food. [Don't drink alcohol](#), not even a little. If it is hard to stop drinking, get some help. Be sure you are up to date on all [immunizations](#). Don't forget that the liver connects to your entire body. Strive for [daily exercise](#), [healthy nutrition](#), good nightly sleep and other ways to improve your health.

Protect yourself and others. Hepatitis B [is transmitted](#) sexually or when the blood of an infected person passes into the blood of an uninfected person. Hep B is not passed by hugging, kissing or sharing food. Learn ways to [prevent passing hepatitis B](#) to others and how to keep yourself safe once you are cured.

Never give up hope. Hepatitis B is manageable, and new treatments are in the [hepatitis B treatment pipeline](#).

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<http://beta.docker.hepmag.com/basics/hepatitis-b-basics/newly-diagnosed-hepatitis-b>