



Liver Complications

HBV/HCV Coinfection

Some people are living with more than one type of hepatitis virus. When someone with hepatitis B virus (HBV) also has hepatitis C (HCV) virus, the term is HBV/HCV coinfection. The prevalence of HBV/HCV coinfection is not precisely known, but the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey found that about 25% of people with hepatitis C in the United States also had positive hepatitis B biomarkers.

Although both HBV and HCV target the liver, they are completely different viruses. HBV is a DNA virus, whereas HCV is an RNA virus. Each virus relies on a different part of cells in order to replicate.

Both HBV and HCV can cause lifelong infection if left untreated. Over time, both can cause liver fibrosis (buildup of scar tissue), cirrhosis, liver cancer, liver failure and the need for liver transplants. Having both hepatitis B and C can increase the risk for severe liver disease.

Under certain circumstances, however, HBV and HCV can inhibit each other. Guidelines recommend that people should be tested for hepatitis B before beginning hepatitis C treatment, as those with HBV may experience flare-ups as HCV replication is suppressed.

Hepatitis B can be prevented with a vaccine and can be treated with antivirals, but these seldom lead to a cure. In contrast, there is no vaccine for hepatitis C, but it can be easily cured with direct-acting antivirals.

Visit the [Hepatitis B Basics](#) and [Hepatitis C Basics](#) to learn more about transmission, diagnosis and treatment for each virus. Click here to learn about [HIV and hepatitis coinfection](#).

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