



## HEPATITIS B AND MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN (MSM)

**Hepatitis B virus (HBV) impacts 2.2 million Americans. Nearly 20% of new HBV cases are among men who have sex with men (MSM). (CDC)**



### **What is Hepatitis B?**

Hepatitis B is a highly preventable liver disease caused by the Hepatitis B virus that lives in the infected person's body fluids. While healthy adults can often fight off and remove the virus in its early stage, if the infection does not go away and is left untreated, it can cause the liver to swell and form scars. This can cause liver failure or liver cancer.

### **How is Hepatitis B spread?**

The hepatitis B virus (HBV) spreads when blood, semen or vaginal fluid of someone infected enters another person's body.

A person with HBV can give the virus to another person from:

- Having unprotected anal, vaginal and/or oral sex
- Sharing needles, syringes or straw for drug use
- Sharing a toothbrush or razors
- Direct contact with the blood or open sores of an infected person
- Birth (mother to baby)

Tips for safer sex:

- Latex condoms can reduce the risk catching HBV
- Oral sex is believed to be very low risk for catching HBV under most situations (i.e., no bleeding, no scar, no sore)
- There is no risk for kissing and hugging because body fluids like saliva and sweat do not have enough virus to be infectious

## **What are the recommendations for men who have sex with men (MSM)?**

A simple blood test can show whether the person is infected with HBV or needs vaccination. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that MSM to get tested and vaccinated for HBV.

Speak to a doctor about testing and/or vaccination if you:

- Have sex partner(s) with HBV
- Have multiple sex partners
- Have other Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) or HIV/AIDS
- Are living with someone with HBV
- Are born in a country where the rate of HBV is high or moderate
- Are unvaccinated and have at least one parent who was born in a country with high HBV rate



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